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ABSTRACT

Contemporary problems in urban education are explored in this collection of papers. The leading article discusses the implications of urban decay and demographic change for school finance and educational accountability. The second paper stresses the need for a basic skills curriculum, well-trained teachers, and the inclusion of parents in curriculum decision making and planning. Subsequent articles focus on the objectives of school improvement programs; government responsibility in urban school reform; the "crisis of confidence" in urban schools; school public relations policies; the importance of community support in improving urban schools; the responsibilities of office and support staff; strategies for motivating students in urban schools; and the effects of negative school environments on urban youth. Other topics discussed include the leadership role of the urban school principal, the political responsibilities of school administrators, and a voluntary desegregation plan for the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania public schools. Contributing authors include Scott D. Thomson, Santee Ruffin, Bernard C. Watson, Bernard G. Kelner, Ronald H. Lewis, Mark R. Shedd, Thomas J. Burns, Vincent E. Reed, Larry Ascough, John C. Fareira, Robert L. Schain, Sydney Weiss, Andrew Robinson, Emeral A. Crosby, Robert W. Evans, James E. Hagerty, Barbara J. Love, Byrd L. Jones, Atron A. Gentry, Frank B. Pesci, Sr., and Richard D. Hanusey. (GC)

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Urban Education in the 80s

The Never Ending Challenge

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Reston, Virginia

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Foreword

SINCE THE DAYS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON Americans have believed in the value of education. Originally, schooling was seen as essential to an enlightened electorate, the central safeguard for maintaining democracy. Later, this argument was supplemented by practical considerations. Education became the surest course to individual success, the handmaiden of Horatio Alger.

This thrust, in turn, was replaced by a wedding of education to social reform. Schooling emerged as the central instrument to equalize opportunity in American society, to ease class lines and to democratize privilege. The thinking was that if education historically had provided an advantage to some, why might it not provide an advantage to all?

Today, the United States is for the most part an urban nation. The culture of the country is dominated by urban newspapers, urban television stations, urban arts centers, urban commerce, urban social trends, and—like it or not—by urban problems. There is a growing realization that the quality and course of urban life will in great measure determine the quality and course of national life. Thus, urban education is of critical importance to all of us.

Some urban schools have problems, but many are excellent. The excellent ones, for the most part, have maintained through the hypermilitancy of the late 1960s and the "soft revolution" of the early 1970s a commitment to quality education. They have always taught basic skills and they still do. They have always sought parental and community support and they still do. They have always recruited committed teachers and they still do. They have always insisted on acceptable student behavior and they still do. And, for the most part, these schools tend to be ignored by the critics and gadflies of urban education as well as by reporters and television commentators.

The authors of this monograph, while not ignoring the real financial crises facing some urban school districts, define progress made in the past five years, and explore prospects for the decade ahead. Most evident throughout the articles is a commitment to compete successfully, to produce academic and civic excellence.

This monograph describes the ingredients of successful urban schools. The ingredients come from experience more than theory, and thus possess an authenticity too rarely found in many works on urban education.

Scott D. Thomson
Executive Director
NASSP

Introduction

AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION is experiencing a confidence crisis. Parents and nonparents alike are questioning the quality of the education system and the merit of funding it. This monograph addresses today's realities in urban education and suggests some ways to meet the multitude of challenges facing everyone associated with urban schools.

The writers represent together hundreds of years of experience in urban education. They have served as teachers, assistant principals, principals, and superintendents. Many of them are themselves products of urban school systems.

Urban education continues to be a popular discussion topic for both educators and noneducators. Much has been written about it, and we think you will agree that most of that writing has focused on the problems. To a large extent the hard work and successes of teachers, principals, students, parents, and communities in urban settings have gone unmentioned.

Many persons in the profession would be hard pressed to give a clear definition of urban education, if it can indeed be defined. This publication does not attempt to provide a definition, but it does take the reader past the "urban problem" syndrome and addresses issues that without too much imagination would also be relevant to suburban and rural school administrators.

There is some mention of racial and class bias, and the usual preconceived attitudes toward urban schools housing high percentages of minority students. However, the writers do not attempt to cover old ground and possibly generate more heat than light.

Urban principals have seen patchwork educational programs come and go. They have heard former university presidents, sociologists, politicians, and patronizing community leaders offer solutions, excuses, and meager funding that have perpetuated the second class existence of a large number of urban school districts. Urban educators are now fully

aware that students need a sound and challenging curriculum; teachers who understand students but do not lower their expectations; involved parents; adequate funding; and communities that recognize dignity in achievement in addition to the absolute necessity of maintaining first class learning institutions.

This publication does not offer recipes that will bring about instant changes in urban schools. It does aim to stimulate thought, to cause each reader to review his or her personal attitudes and approaches to our most important goal . . . quality education for all students.

Santee C. Ruffin, Jr.
Director of Urban Services
NASSP

The Realities of Urban Educators for the 1980s

by Bernard C. Watson

IN THE FOREWORD to *In Metropolitan School Organization*, published in 1973, Jack Culbertson wrote:

> In many cities across the land the imposing structures of schools built early in this century symbolize both the past and present in education. These structures and the architecture that shaped them remind us of the pioneering and glorious days of urban education; they and the conditions surrounding them also highlight the pervasive and sweeping changes of recent decades that have helped create the current crisis in urban education.[1]

In the years since those words were written, the urban educational crisis has worsened and the effects upon children and youth attending schools in cities are obvious and often frightening.

The conditions of educational crisis found in almost all cities are relatively well known; what is not as well known are the historical precedents which created present conditions. Urban areas, particularly the cities, have for many generations been industrial centers which attracted the poor of all nations and the rural poor of our own country. They came seeking employment, housing, education and a better life for themselves and their children.

Bernard C. Watson is vice president for academic administration, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.

1. Troy V. McKelvey, ed., "Inside the Metropolis," in *Metropolitan School Organization, Vol. I, Basic Problems and Patterns* (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1973).

Prior to World War II, the cities contained a healthy mix of the affluent, the middle-class, and the poor. As the waves of European immigrants gained economic self-sufficiency, education, and a foothold in the business and economic enterprise, they moved into the middle income group and were, in turn, replaced by other poor people. Migrants from the rural south, Puerto Rico, and Mexico moved to the cities for similar reasons. Through it all, however, the socio-economic heterogeneity was maintained.

Following World War II, two significant changes occurred that had profound effects upon urban areas generally and on cities in particular. The enactment of the Federal Housing Act generated a massive building program in residential housing. Literally millions of city dwellers were able to purchase homes, either under FHA or the G.I. Bill. Most of the housing, however, was built outside the boundaries of cities. Land was cheaper and construction loan guarantees were higher in rural or undeveloped areas. Urban residents were encouraged to move to what later became well-developed suburban areas. This however, was but one element of the phenomenon.

Because of practices, policies, and existing law, blacks and other minorities were excluded from most of the developing suburban areas. In addition, the cost of housing in the tract developments created a more homogeneous population, not only in terms of race, but in socio-economic condition. Simply stated, the suburban areas, particularly the newer ones, became primarily white, middle income, and residential. There were few, if any, multiple dwelling and rental units, little business and industrial building, and few jobs in these essentially bedroom communities.

The cities, of course, were increasingly inhabited by the poor and the minorities. Other people worked in the cities because that is where the jobs were located; business and industry had not yet begun the exodus from the cities. It was still convenient for suburban dwellers to work in the cities; the federal highway legislation had made that possible.

Over time, this series of developments had grave repercussions for the cities in general, and specifically for urban education. The movement of the more affluent and better educated from the cities siphoned off needed skills and weakened the tax base, leaving cities with fewer resources to provide for a population which needed and demanded more human services. This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that cities had to provide services, not only for full-time residents, but also for those who worked in the city and lived in suburban areas.

The suburban residents, of course, did not pay their proportionate share of taxes to support the services. Police, fire, sanitation, and many other costs increased as income and taxes decreased, an untenable situa-

tion. This combination of factors came to be known as municipal overburden, and all of the major urban centers suffered.

Employment soon followed residents to suburban areas. Industrial parks, regional and national corporate headquarters, new plant construction, and new retail businesses shifted from cities to suburban areas. This shifting of the economic base was frequently encouraged by government policies which made land available at reduced costs to attract business and industry. Local governments underwrote the costs of water and sewer developments and gave favorable tax breaks to the economic enterprise. Cities and urban areas continued to decay.

The Urban Landscape: Cities in Crisis

Americans are looking for evidence that 'progress" has taken place and that the future holds the promise of greater prosperity, freedom, and equality for all citizens. Yet to many of us, the achievement of these goals does not seem possible. We see our vision of the American dream clouded by the specters of massive unemployment, rising crime, widespread government corruption, racial hostility, and municipal decay. We search for "one nation indivisible," and discover instead the apparitions of elitism, regionalism, classism, sexism, racism, and separatism of all shades and textures engraved upon the canvas of the land. We pursue the beacons of justice and quality, only to have them obscured by "economic considerations" which loom paramount to human needs and concerns.

Perhaps the most obvious smudges on this grey landscape are the problems of our nation's urban centers, where more than one-fourth of the total population and more than half of the minority population of this country reside.[2] Bearing a disproportionate share of the country's fiscal burdens in terms of human services and taxes, the cities struggle to remain solvent and to provide a livable environment for their citizens in the face of increasing costs, municipal overburden, eroding tax bases, labor strife, high unemployment, housing shortages, and rising crime rates.

In the midst of this panorama of crises, urban schools are experiencing massive budget cuts, teachers' strikes, court-ordered desegregation plans, and rapid population shifts concurrent with legislative and citizen demands for increased quality of services, academic standards, and methods of accountability.

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2. 1974 census reports indicate that about 28 percent of the total population live in central cities, and 64 percent live in metropolitan areas. The comparable figures for black Americans are 58 percent and 74 percent respectively. Bureau of the Census, *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1974* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 12, 14.

The fiscal problems that have plagued the entire country during the past 10 years are amplified in the case of education. Costs have risen faster in the area of schooling than they have in other sectors of the economy, in part because education is a highly labor-intensive operation. Because capital is not easily substituted for labor, productivity does not increase in schools as rapidly as it does in other industries. The factor of rising costs obviously reflects other policy considerations, such as the growth and strengthening of teachers' unions, as well as the growth of the educational enterprise as a whole.

Since the bulk of school revenues are derived from local property taxes,[3] the fact that for the past 25 years urban property values have been declining sharply relative to their surrounding metropolitan areas[4] impacts severely on the fiscal capability of such districts. In addition, expenditures and taxes for noneducational services are considerably higher in cities than they are in other geographic areas,[5] forcing schools to compete, often unsuccessfully, for an equal share of the municipal tax dollar.

Because most large-city school boards are appointed rather than elected they often do not have the authority to levy and collect taxes, and hence are dependent upon the city government for allocations of school funds. When the city government is itself hard-pressed for revenues, adequate funds for school support are difficult to obtain.

The need for increased school revenues is further exacerbated in many urban districts by higher costs for land, for construction and maintenance of school buildings, for professional and nonprofessional em-

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3. In 1969-70, approximately 53 percent of all school revenues came from local sources. National Education Association, *Estimates of School Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1969), p. 35. A National Educational Finance Project study reports that "(i)t is estimated that 97 to 98 percent of all local taxes collected by school districts is derived from the property tax." Duane O. Moore, "Local Nonproperty Taxes for Schools," in *Status and Impact of Educational Finance Programs*, eds. Roe L. Johns, Kern Alexander, and Dewey H. Stollar (Gainesville, Fla.: National Educational Finance Project, 1971), p. 210.

4. Seymour Sacks, David Ranney, and Ralph Andrew, *City Schools—Suburban Schools: A History of Fiscal Conflict* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1972), pp. 66-75.

5. Central city taxes for noneducational functions were 91 percent higher than those in surrounding metropolitan areas in 1967. Sacks, Ranney, and Andrew, *City Schools*, pp. 110-111. Large city per capita expenditures were more than 50 percent higher than state averages in the following categories in 1969-70: fire protection, 91 percent higher; refuse collection, 87 percent; health services, 70 percent; sewers, 66 percent; and police protection, 53 percent. John J. Callahan, William H. Wilken, and M. Tracy Sillerman, *Urban Schools and School Finance Reform: Promise and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: The National Urban Coalition, 1973), p. 26.

ployees, for security measures, and for special educational services needed by many students.[6] While recent attempts at school finance reform have sought to address the complex dilemma of urban needs through adjustments to existing state school finance formulas,[7] most such reforms have been initiated in a piecemeal fashion as addenda to existing finance statutes, rather than in the form of comprehensive legislation which integrates principles of school funding with considerations of equity in education access, programming, and state and local accountability.

The relationship between issues of school finance and other measures of educational opportunity has been recognized by some scholars and educators, yet most legislative and judicial approaches to funding matters have carefully avoided reference to school segregation or educational programs which serve to reinforce the existing class and racial distinctions in American society. As Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb observed more than 30 years ago:

> The American school . . . reflects the socioeconomic order in everything that it does; in what it teaches, who does the teaching, who does the hiring and firing of teachers, and what the children learn in and out of the classroom. . . . The curricula of the secondary schools provide early pathways to success and failure, they operate in a different way on the several class levels, and they are used in a different way by the children of the higher and lower levels. It is apparent that the high school curriculum is a mechanism that helps perpetuate our class order.[8]

Demographic Considerations

The current enrollment in our nation's schools is approximately 47.8 million. Enrollment figures suggest that by 1986-87, the school age popu-

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6. See U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Inequality in School Financing: The Role of the Law* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 33-36; Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Report of the Commissioner's Ad Hoc Group on School Finance, Equal Opportunity Hearings*, pt. 16D-3 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1971); Joel S. Berke and John J. Callahan, *Inequities in School Finance* (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Co., 1971); Phyllis Myers, "Second Thoughts on the *Serrano* Case," *City Magazine*, Winter 1971, pp. 38-41.

7. Urban adjustments to state school finance formulae recently adopted by various states range from payments based on district size, density, and wealth (both property and income) to those based on the number or proportion of economically or educationally "disadvantaged" students in the district, as well as measures of "municipal overburden" and cost of living within the district.

8. William Lloyd Warner, Robert J. Havighurst, and Martin B. Loeb, *Who Shall Be Educated?* (New York: Harper Publishing, 1944), p. xi.

lation will be just above 45 million.[9] Consequently, many urban school administrators and boards of education will face serious decisions regarding the closing of schools. For example, New York City predicts the shutdown of approximately 200 schools by 1990.[10]

Although demographers predict that the elementary school age population will continue to decline, the percentage of blacks in the public schools will continue to increase. But black Americans are concentrated in a comparatively few, poorly financed urban public school systems. For example, 571,146 or 16.8 percent of New York State's 3,393,983 students in grades K-12 are black and 95 percent of these black students attend school in 11 of the 740 school districts within New York.[11]

The concentration of black Americans can be more dramatically illustrated by pointing out that more students attend public schools in New York City than in the states of Wyoming, West Virginia, New Mexico, Idaho, and Rhode Island combined. But these statistics are of particular significance to black Americans because similar statements can be made of the other 10 larger public school systems in the country, each of which serves a majority black enrollment. Demographic and economic trends provide evidence that such enrollment patterns are likely to continue into the 1980s.

Although black Americans constitute approximately 11 percent of the total population of this country, they are overrepresented in the public schools. Black enrollment in private schools is highest for students from families with incomes of more than $15,000. With the exception of the western region of the United States, where both white and black enrollment in private schools is low, there are substantial differences in private school attendance with white enrollment far exceeding that of blacks. Examination of private school enrollment patterns clearly reveals that for most black Americans, public schools remain the most viable, if not the only, option for participation in education.

Public schools are also the only option for Hispanics, who represent a major minority in this country. If present population trends continue, in fact, they will replace blacks as the largest minority within a decade. Nearly 27 percent of the Hispanic families in the United States earn less than $7,000 a year. Hispanics are the least educated of Americans. Only 40 percent have completed high school, compared to 46 percent of black

9. See *Digest of Educational Statistics*, National Center for Education Statistics, 1977-78.
10. Barry Hillenbrand, "Decline in Enrollment," *Time Magazine*, May 21, 1979.
11. "*Education Background Papers*," National Urban League, 1977, p. 2.

Americans and 67 percent of white Americans. And, in urban ghetto areas, the school dropout rate for Hispanics frequently reaches 85 percent.[12] Language is an obvious handicap, but with the creation of special programs including bilingual programs, the gap between Hispanics and their black and white counterparts can be narrowed.

School Finance

Support for public education has declined during the past decade. Although individuals may disagree about the magnitude of the decline, it is clear that there has been a decline. But the reasons for the decline are complex. Many believe the decline in public support is due to problems caused by busing; others attribute the decline to a lack of discipline in schools and the increase in violence and vandalism. Still others attribute the decline to poor student performance and a continuing decline in academic standards.

All of these reasons probably play a part in the declining level of support for public schools, but so does the fact that the economy is in dire straits. Taxes have increased, but because of inflation many people can no longer afford to pay increasing proportions of their income for property taxes when the essentials of life—food, shelter and clothing—compete for funds. But since much of public education's support comes from property taxes, there has been a resulting decline in financial support for public schools. In addition, much of the public's discontent has centered on schools.

Schools alone, however, are not responsible for the decline in the economy, rampant inflation, increasing unemployment, or the increases in violence and vandalism in schools or society. Students are not solely responsible for the decline in academic performance, the increasing costs of teacher and administrative salaries and fringe benefits, or the court decisions which mandate busing as a legal remedy for past illegal segregation. Nonetheless, the public frequently supports solutions which "blame the victim" (e.g., Proposition 13, rejection of school bond issues) or, respond to symptoms (e.g., minimum competency tests administered at the end of the twelfth year of schooling, demands for teacher accountability, and the assignment of police to schools).

State aid to education is popularly thought to be intended to equalize school expenditures and tax burdens for education. State aid, however, is typically not sufficient to overcome local disparities in spending for education. The result is high taxes and low expenditures for poor school

12. "It's Your Turn in the Sun," *Time Magazine*, October 16, 1978, pp. 48-61.

districts. Funding of public education has traditionally operated to provide the children of the affluent with a better quality of education than the children of the poor.

More recently, a number of researchers have documented the relationship between students' socio-economic status and the amount of school resources made available to them:

> There is empirical evidence that school districts allocate substantially fewer dollars to schools in poor and black neighborhoods, indeed, within-district disparities may be as significant as disparities in a given state.[13]

Discrimination against black and other minority children in the allocation of educational resources continues. The Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law recently completed a study of the under-funding of majority-black school districts in the South and found that resource disparities between majority-white and majority-black districts have grown considerably since desegregation:

> In many majority-black districts which lost large numbers of white students to private segregation academies, public officials have been unwilling to levy local property taxes adequate to support the public schools at a level equal to that provided in comparable districts serving predominately-white student bodies. In addition to low tax effort, majority-black districts also tend to be poor in property wealth and personal income. Low effort and low wealth reinforce each other to maximize inequalities between majority-black and majority-white districts.[14]

Minorities and School Finance

The role of black Americans and other minorities in school finance reform must be expanded.

> . . . school finance is not necessarily partisan. (It is) . . . broad-based, and the pressures for reform are general. Yet paradoxically, school finance legislation is highly technical information and expertise constitutes power, and they usually belong to a select group.[15]

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13. David Kinp and Mark G. Yudif, "Serrano in the Political Arena?" *Yale Review of Law and Social Action* (2) 1971: 144.

14. From Testimony of David Long, Director of School Finance Reform Project of the L.C.C.R.L. to the Subcommittee on Elementary/Secondary and Vocational Education of the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, September 28, 1977.

15. Peggy Seigel, "The Politics of School Finance Reform," in Campbell, *State Policy Making for the Public Schools* (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan, 1976), p. 87.

The reluctance of many states to institute needed reforms is probably less an indication of legislative disinterest than a reflection of political pressure and their perception of the "state of the art." Even though cost-of-living and income adjustments, educational need weighting, and municipal overburden factors in state aid formulas promise substantial assistance to urban and poor districts, they are unrefined and politically controversial. They are in clear need of further development and are, therefore, ripe subjects for further research and legislative deliberation.

Yet, the predominant educational decision-making structure effectively precludes input from the minority community. The growing complexity and differentiation of the educational enterprise requires ever more specialization and, as a result, policy-making responsibility increasingly devolves to more and more centralized decision-making bodies. The possibility of making significant contributions to the development of education and school finance reform policy is, therefore, conditioned on (1) a knowledge of the issues; (2) an understanding of specialized language; and, (3) strategic access to the centers of decision-making power.

But, as the policy considerations of legislators, board members and educators have become more intricate, education consumers and even newly-installed minority legislators have become further removed from a clear understanding and appreciation of the processes and outcomes of reform deliberations. Whether by accident or design, the result has been a general exclusion of nonspecialists and also an insulation of techniques from public scrutiny. The general public is affected by this problem; however, minorities and the poor are most adversely affected.

Poor and minority residents rarely have sufficient access to critical information that will allow them to make informed personal choices among public policy alternatives. Education and school finance information which does filter to these residents is more often a reflection of the political stance of the organization distributing the message than a clear interpretation of the stake the urban and minority poor have in the outcome of the debates. As a result, residents often choose not to participate in what they consider campaigns of manipulation and propaganda.

When there is a call for the nominal involvement of low-income residents, communication is often one way. Because they are considered, and often are, unsophisticated in the working of the decision-making network, minorities and the poor are discouraged from taking part in problem solving and may, in fact, become uncomfortable with the technical language of the "experts."

The situation regarding urban and minority legislators is similar. The general failure of these legislators to sow the fields and thereby reap the benefits of school finance reform probably results from either a lack of

understanding of the complexities and fiscal rewards of reform, or a lack of reliable technical assistance.

Despite the fact that many school finance suits have been brought on behalf of the urban and minority residents, or that they stand to gain considerably from the outcome of reforms, there is still a critical shortage of technically skilled minorities contributing to the development and analysis of school finance policy.

School finance research organizations rarely tap the skills of minority researchers. Nor has there been a major concerted effort to train minorities in the areas of school finance and public policy research. Consequently, urban and minority legislators have yet to take a frontline position in the battle for school finance reform. The current lack of minority expertise, the absence of minority representation on reform policy-making bodies, and the blanket of silence surrounding complex and technical reform deliberations have often combined to effectively strip urban and minority residents of any real contribution to the final outcome of reform proposals.

However, there can be little hope that the peculiar fiscal and educational problems confronting urban and minority-concentrated districts will be effectively resolved without actively involving urban and minority representatives in the development, implementation, and evaluation of reform plans.

Accountability

The responsibility for school accountability is most often ascribed to school staff members. Accountability has come to be regarded by many as a giant sledgehammer poised over the heads of fearful teachers who are not quite sure what is expected of them, but who sense impending doom if they do not "succeed."

In 1979, Dade County, Fla., teachers and school board members ratified a new contract that included new salary and accountability provisions. Also included in the new contract was a "three-year contract that would eliminate the possibility of tenure for all new teachers and for those in the first or second years of the three-year probationary period required for a Florida continuing contract."[16]

However, the teacher's role in educational accountability is not nearly so awesome or diffuse as some have pictured it to be. The basic obligations of the teachers are competence and a belief in the ability of

16. J. Leo Freiwald, "Tenure: Another Sacred Cow About To Bite the Dust?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1979, p. 50.

children. Teachers must accept the fact that most parents want the best for their children, and should respond to these aspirations positively and constructively, rather than with warnings or prophecies of failure. A teacher's knowledge of subject matter is useless if he or she does not believe that the knowledge can be communicated to the students, that they are capable of learning beyond the limits of certain imposed expectations.

Teachers must insist upon high standards for their students and accept the responsibility for ensuring that those who pass through know more and can cope better as a result of having been in the school.

An insistence upon high academic standards is only one part of developing a positive image within the school and within students themselves. Nonacademic activities play a very important role in developing confidence and a good self-image, qualities which are at least as important as grades and scores. Athletics, clubs, theatrical and musical productions, and student policy-making groups give students an opportunity to develop qualities of leadership, poise, and teamwork as well as to demonstrate their abilities publicly and to interact with each other and the community at large.

Finally, teachers and school staff must know that personal concern for students is at least as important as knowledge and good teaching skills. Learning is an activity which does not take place in a vacuum out of reach of social considerations or personal problems. If these are ignored, the learning process may grind to a halt, and students may be left along the wayside with their chances of catching up lessened with each consecutive year. As Betty Reardon, director of the School Program of the Institute for World Order, has observed:

> Educators must recognize that among the most basic of human needs is to know what it is to be human and to understand the quality as the foremost component of an emerging world community. Humaneness is the first requisite of survival and, therefore, of relevance.[17]

And, while teachers have a major responsibility to teach students about the world as it is, they must also teach to expose a vision of what the world can become. This vision must communicate to each student what his or her potential role in this future world can be. It must reveal possibilities rather than simply limitations; it must offer inspiration rather than rejection and defeat.

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17. Betty Reardon, "Beyond Nationalism: Education and Survival," in *Controversies in Education*, eds. Dwight W. Allen and Jeffrey C. Heck (Philadelphia: W. B. Sanders, Co. 1974) p. 62.

If teachers will combine the cognitive with the compassionate they will make a significant input into the accomplishment of school responsibility.

Standards

A significant development taking shape on the heels of fiscal reforms is the growing push for competency legislation, which requires that students must exhibit a certain level of achievement before they can graduate. The underlying reason for the push toward achievement standards is obvious. Relative decreases in state revenue collections, spiraling educational costs, and widespread reports of decreasing student performance have joined to make parents keenly aware that education is a consumer concern. Legislators and education officials are attempting to respond to that concern. Yet, significantly, the imposition of graduation competency requirements places the onus of poor performance exclusively on the youngster.

Moreover, unless current measures to institute competency requirements are balanced by foresight concerning their broader psycho-social and economic consequences, and unless such efforts are open to the widest possible forum for discussion in order to include spokesmen for disadvantaged youth, the results will likely be devastating. The inclination to proceed as if the mere passage of legislation will somehow correct basic systemic deficiencies appears to be gaining widespread popularity.

The effort to ensure that schools provide children at least minimum preparation for adult life must not be allowed to degenerate into a movement back to the social ignorance of the pre-1960s. Graduation "floors" are not enough. What is required is nothing less than a systemic retooling of fiscal and administrative procedures and changes in the delivery of educational services at the level of the individual child.

One is tempted to argue that the most significant, perhaps the most important, innovation which could be installed in many public schools in this country would be programs and teaching strategies to provide all students with basic literacy! The effect of such an innovation on employment, self-confidence, and stability in human relationships would be immeasurable. In the cities, such an innovation might begin to restore public confidence in public education, something which has diminished significantly as school systems have become increasingly non-white.

Implications

Black and other minority children who attend schools in large urban areas are receiving diminished educational programs as their districts are faced with huge budget deficits. These deficits occur despite school fi-

nance reforms in a number of states, because those reforms have ignored the unique fiscal and educational problems of the cities.

There are some other dangers lurking in the background. Tracking—the practice of grouping students according to ability and performance and placing them in different curricula—is illustrative of one danger. Although there is great similarity in many, perhaps most, classrooms in American schools, there are also important differences. Recent research findings show variations between "regular" and predominately disadvantaged classes. In the first year of school, disadvantaged children spend proportionately more time in reading, but by the third grade spend less time on reading than their advantaged counterparts. The disadvantaged third grade children also spend less time in singing and music, physical education, and independent work of a relatively creative sort.

One researcher found that upper and lower tracks in junior high schools were quite different, and that the two tracks—based on prior school achievement and ability—were strongly associated with social class and ethnic separation. The upper track students expected school to influence their growth and to be treated as "junior partners"; that is, to have their opinions taken seriously. The lower track students had no such sense of proprietorship in the school and saw little justification for performing the tasks of the school.

Other studies have found differences in the way teachers interact with upper and lower track students. Teachers expect more of upper track students, give them more independence and more challenging work, and spend more time on intellectual and academic tasks. The opposite is true for lower track student/teacher interaction. The differences in content can be staggering, even when the subjects carry the same title

It is not uncommon to find students from different tracks graduating from high school, having taken subjects bearing the same titles, having very different levels of preparation, knowledge, and skill. Perhaps most devastating of all, those lower track students have severely limited options in employment, pursuit of further education, and ability to participate in the broader political, economic, and social life of society.

Because teaching is so closely correlated with social class, race, and ethnicity, schools may create and maintain a self-fulfilling prophecy. Schools track students on the basis of ability and prior school performance; the curriculum reinforces the differences identified and used as a basis for tracking; schools expect less from those in lower tracks and more from those in higher tracks. Students respond in kind to the perceptions and behavior of their teachers and they graduate or leave school having attained the levels of performance with the self-image imposed upon them by the process described above.

The need for the common school with broad comprehensive programs designed to educate every child is perhaps more acute today than at any time in our history. Quality education properly conceived does more than prepare students for jobs and higher education. Quality education develops independent, thinking, responsible, feeling, caring human beings and citizens. Quality education strengthens the fabric of a pluralistic society as it continues its historic journey to freedom and equality. Quality education, while respecting and even celebrating our differences, emphasizes our similarities and common history and destiny. What schooling in America has helped to avoid is the rise of nations within a nation, the growth of linguistic, racial, and communal fractionalism that has long haunted other countries such as India, Belgium, and most recently, Canada.

Our country was founded and has prospered on the assumption and the philosophy that people of different racial, ethnic, economic, political, and cultural backgrounds could live, work, and prosper together. Although there is much to be done in this country to live up to our philosophy and our creed, few would deny that the United States has achieved a degree of success which is unprecedented in human history.

The dangers of dividing Americans along class, racial, or ethnic lines are enormous. Creating or perpetuating an underclass of uneducated, out-of-school, unskilled, unemployed, and hopeless youth is fraught with danger. Yet, these are predictable consequences if we fail to recognize the importance and value of the common school—a vicious circle, and one unworthy of schooling in America. The results of such practices and perceptions may be identified in the costs of welfare, prisons, mental health and, ultimately and most important, in wasted human resources, the most valuable and underutilized resources in our country.

Summary

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, it is apparent that urban educators must identify urban educational needs and determine how they will be attained and implemented. Clearly, this will not be an easy task.

Urban educators must become visionaries in order to conceive and define innovative approaches that will effectively deal with educational crises brought about by such realities as increasing violence and vandalism and decreasing achievement test scores. These two realities and the subsequent conditions they spawn have resulted in continued declining numbers of middle class students, the increasing and too often violent response toward efforts to desegregate, and more recently the public's demand for educational accountability.

Educators must expand their role to that of helping the public understand the linkages and impact of international, national, and local conditions on the process of schooling and the "State of Urban Education." To do otherwise will result in the all too common "reactionary" rather than "active" role needed to affect positive changes in the condition of urban education for the 1980s.

The Children's Right To Know

by Bernard G. Kelner

If RELEVANCE WAS the educational catchword of the '60s, today it is responsibility. Why the change from meaning to accountability; from making students want to learn to insisting that they do? Achievement receives top ranking in surveys of parental concern and the call for minimal competencies sounds throughout the land.

Paradoxical as it may appear, current problems in education may prove a blessing if they force us to review the history of our schools, to find strength in cooperative action, and to rededicate ourselves to noble goals. Further, the curriculum is an excellent place to begin.

America's schools were established for achievement. Along history's way, we strayed from our purpose. Small as colonial schools were, and despite the limited program, their curriculum made sense. Learning how to live in the world and to do its work occurred in the home, the shop, and the farm. Placed in the perspective of the child's life, the school provided balance: intellectual achievement supplementing the physical, social, and vocational.

In similar fashion during the nineteenth century the schools were responsive to national needs, adding business and technical courses with the arrival of the industrial revolution.

By mid-century, the victory of public taxation for free education had been won. The great argument for public support was the preservation of the state. Democracy could not survive an illiterate citizenry.

With the 1900s came the waves of immigrants. Converting millions of foreigners to Americans was a prime concern. How could the new-

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comer be helped to sound the strange names of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln and be motivated to seek the wonders of the new world: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?"

The scientific movement offered solutions: standardized testing, ability grouping, prescribed curricula, and a formalized pedagogy. Now it was accepted that the potential of students could be determined objectively. They could be assigned curricula to match their abilities, and the teacher could deal precisely with each student's needs.

It was possible in the '20s for a school administrator to claim that he knew what every teacher in the city was teaching at any moment of the school day. This was no idle boast. The courses of study provided content day by day, time allotments, and lists of materials to be used. Those preparing for the principalship knew they would be asked to outline on their examination papers a portion of the content set out in the courses. Teachers were prepared in the normal school on the basis of strictly defined curriculum. Supervisors were not "on call," rather they entered the classroom for the specific purpose of making certain that the courses were followed. After a few years, teachers became proficient in their grade, could refer to class texts by memory, had amassed collections of illustrative materials, and spoke with authority to parents.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. The great depression of the '30s made all school practices suspect. The progressive movement called for removal of standardized curriculum and the adoption of individualized instruction. Teachers were to avoid following courses of study and develop their own teaching units. To help them, "suggested" guides were introduced.

But noble as these objectives were, insufficient attention was given to their implementation. As a result, school programs went out of balance. Teachers who had 30 years of commendable service following prescribed content, time allotments, and routines were at a loss with the complexities of a changing curriculum. In a frantic attempt to be modern, schools frequently accepted children's interests without question. The "whole child" and unhampered expression of that child's needs became paramount. For every class released to a new-found freedom and a richer curriculum, there were many more who had only slogans to justify their activities.

The great error of the time was to view all teachers as possessing the highly technical skills of curriculum development. In their failure to attain the best, school systems lost much that was good. With a stroke of the pen, administrators set aside the years of experience and self-regard that marked most teachers. In their place, they introduced an uncertainty that reaches to the present.

Dismayed by the present and frightened by the future, the people once again turn to their schools for answers. The demands of minorities for social justice have surfaced issues hidden too long. Full educational opportunity still eludes our grasp. The urban districts compound the frustration. Many of its citizens are functionally illiterate. Their inadequacies in reading, writing, and computing constitute a national catastrophe. For millions of Americans, equality of opportunity remains an illusion as long as they lack basic skills; not only are they unprepared vocationally but they are denied access to most of the recorded knowledge.

Failure to achieve almost always mean failure to behave. It is of little value to tell a student he is of worth when he cannot hold his own with his peers; and self-image diminishes with the passing years. The problem is most acute where there is a concentration of the rejected, the impoverished, and the disenfranchised. The improvement of our schools, then, is more than a worthy cause; it is essential for the survival of a democratic people. If we do not improve our schools we may lose our freedom.

In these troubled times we need to stand back and look at our schools with attitudes of reason and objectivity. Schools, like people, present several faces to the world. The viewer reads his own concerns in each face. Clear vision would call for a balanced curriculum based on our intellectual heritage and, like the schools of the past, a response to real-life needs.

Basic Skills Are Survival Skills

What are the minimum essentials that our democratic society requires?

Basic skills are a must. The arguments of learning through television and automated machinery notwithstanding, knowing how to read and to compute are still necessary for mastery in every subject area and for obtaining any meaningful position above unskilled labor.

The problem is especially acute for the poor. To a mother in the ghetto, failure of her child to read means failure to shed the fear that her child will be forever unemployed. The only way out and up is through literacy. It may be possible for the middle class parent to provide tutors to overcome educational deficiencies or, through influence, obtain entrance into favored schools and employment. No such advantage resides in the housing project. To the poverty stricken, reading, writing, and arithmetic are not luxuries but survival. For educators in the cities to talk otherwise is to play games with the lives of innocent children.

Another basic skill is command of the scientific method: reasoning logically, learning how to study in order to find information independent-

ly, and organizing that information meaningfully. Separating fact from fiction in dealing with the host of issues in daily living demands clear thinking.

Who will deny that we shall never have a better world until the barriers between the peoples have fallen, and a bond among nations has been finally achieved? Until acceptance of the worth of the individual prevails, stability and contentment will remain at the outskirts of society. The social studies, then, are essential, for they teach respect for the contributions of all people, knowledge of the political scene, historical perspective, and economic awareness.

A new kind of citizen is needed today. An individual may be well adjusted in home and in community, free of emotional stress, just and kind, literate—and yet fall far short of being an adequate citizen in 1980.

The basic assumption in democracy is that citizens will be informed on all matters that depend upon their decision, that they have made the common welfare their concern, and that they are interested enough to join in the making of policy.

We must help develop such competency. Our schools must produce citizens who can see through social myth, who will guarantee civil rights in the communities, who will demand accounting from their leaders, and who can see beyond narrow nationalism to international cooperation.

Existence is more than bread and toil; the arts provide sweetness to life. A song or a painting contains its own message of truth. The soul of a nation can best be understood in its creative expression. A curriculum devoid of the aesthetics represents an unfilled commitment.

What is basic is always changing. Today's teachers can no longer be "those who know it all and transmit it to those who know little." Instead, professionals must become liberating influences seeking the strengths of those with whom they work, and arranging the conditions whereby these strengths may be realized.

Much is known about the ways people learn: That growth cannot be hurried without paying a penalty; that readiness for learning must be encouraged; that fear handicaps; that the natural desire to know does not burn only in scheduled periods, or glow with a steady, standardized heat. Learning best takes place where there is an attempt to solve problems of real meaning by using important facts, habits, and skills.

A truly productive school, therefore, would look at each student not as a memory machine or a number on the rolls, but as a human being with special worth and with certain unique qualities. It would wish each student to grow in all desirable ways. It would be aware that each lives in a different place, and consequently the best kind of education occurs when school, home, and community work together.

Needs Must Be Defined

Discussion of needs is fruitless without definition. Much of the aimless posture of a number of schools stems from failure to state clear objectives and the means of obtaining these objectives. Pious utterances are no substitute for obtainable goals.

There are teachers and principals who would be successful in almost any situation, just as there are students who scarcely need to be taught. However, most require, in varying degrees, clear performance standards. To treat all by a definition applicable to a few is naïve stereotyping.

Discussion regarding curriculum must begin with a frame of reference —a precise scope and sequence that takes priority over type of organization. Without this common reference school and community argue without profit; professional staff is inadequately informed of its responsibilities and thus suspicious of evaluation. Only in this way can we ensure the attainment of stated objectives. Now when dysfunction occurs, debate can be meaningful: to petition authorities to change the requirements, to seek permission for experimentation, or to search for effective implementation of that which is required.

We must avoid the sophist's trick that takes a position of moderation and returns it as an extreme statement. Certainly there is no seeking of a return to the mindless drill of the past, its regimentation of folded hands on desks, its denial of creative pedagogical approaches. Nor should we avoid addressing ourselves to legitimate questions regarding sequence of learning. There is rightful concern that a statement of achievement requirements does not lead to a tracking system, unconscionable "leaving back" of countless students, or denial of teachers' initiative.

The question may be asked, "Why not establish minimum essentials for those who desire them and let others pursue a free course?" Two fundamental rights preclude such a plan. The first is the right of government to a literate, aware, and competent citizenry; the second is the right of the individual to a full and equal education. Attainment of these rights cannot be left to chance.

A defensible course is to define minimum essentials for all but allow the teacher freedom to select methods, materials, and content beyond the minimum essentials. In its attempt to satisfy the range of learning styles represented in its students, the school can then select a variety of approaches, from open education to conventional programs. Given a frame of reference, experimentation should be encouraged within the guidelines: Permission first obtained from the curriculum office; support given by administration; parental permission obtained after intensive exploration; results evaluated; and implications disseminated throughout the school district.

While vigorously opposing regimentation and standardization, definition would help school and community to work together toward common goals. It is important for a school district to provide that definition lest it remain content in doing too little or dissipate energies in trying to do too much. Uncertainty would be removed when an official position is taken on important issues such as required curricula or promotion policy.

Strange as it may seem, failure to set a clear curriculum framework and define minimum essentials may be a subtle form of class discrimination. Freedom to succeed carries with it freedom to fail. In an effort to protect poor and minority students from poor marks and possible nonpromotion, practices have been established which cry out for reexamination.

Education in a democracy should be a path toward self-fulfillment. Development of one's powers always requires challenging, rigorous, and frequently onerous work. Study and thinking are often pleasant but also difficult. To water down education in terms of sympathy is to leave victims of such misguided emotion unprepared either to move to the next higher level of learning or to find employment when formal schooling ends.

To give a passing grade for failing work to a student implies that student is incapable of achievement. Progress carries its own integrity regardless of race or creed or economic condition. Sooner or later the student learns that he has been moved along, patted on the back, and told lies by the very people who are supposed to be the advocates of truth.

The issue is not avoidance of standards but an unceasing effort to make content relevant and pedagogy motivating. To do otherwise is to degrade education for both the student and the teacher, to lose public support, and to make permanent a mediocre schooling that leads nowhere but to stagnation in position and in talent.

What Is the School Expected To Accomplish?

Obviously the setting of requirements will lead to organizational changes. Immediately comes the issue of nonpromotion and its spectre of schools inhabited by overaged students bent upon wreaking their displeasure upon life and property. One way of avoiding the dilemma is to remove the unilateral role of the school. There should be frequent parental consultation with opportunity for complete examination of the student's strengths and weaknesses, pattern of growth, needs, and reasonable expectations. Placement can be approached as a shared responsibility.

In any event, nonpromotion should not mean repetition of identical experience. Imaginative remedial programs are needed. The school should be free to place a student with other teachers, with other content, with other classmates.

Annual reorganization which was adopted in order to provide continuous education should be reexamined. Reassignment of students should not wait for the close of the school year. Curricula can be organized for shorter periods of time. The concern of potential drop-outs that non-promotion would mean repetition of an entire year could be removed.

The school year itself requires study. To help the student who is having difficulty, the school should be kept in session beyond regular school hours for such purposes as special tutoring. Summer school classes should be provided and experimentation begun in year-round programs. Wherever possible, the community school program should be established to provide learning opportunities for all age levels.

Grouping is often a form of discrimination against the poverty and minority learner. Under the aegis of the scientific movement, students are frequently placed in a track system with a differentiated curriculum. The objective is the placement of the learner with studies appropriate to presumed abilities.

There is considerable justification in believing that much of our standardized testing measures the consequences of economic standing and social conditioning rather than inherited potential. The attack against a strongly defined curriculum is based upon fear of "lock-stepping" the student in a rigid program of studies. It may well be that without such a curriculum, we have rendered the poor student immobile. In many cases, the differentiated curriculum has not increased choice but limited it. The lowest track can lead only to low-level occupations. One need only look to the past to see provision of the same kind of arrangement under the rationale of protecting blacks and immigrants from failure.

Setting requirements also means settling the issue of what the school is expected to accomplish. People of goodwill as well as pressure groups have introduced into the curriculum a host of programs, most of which have merit, but which in total impose a crushing burden upon the teacher. Much has been added and, almost without exception, nothing has been subtracted. As a consequence, individual schools and teachers determine priorities, some of which lack justification. In those instances, the student always suffers.

The school will have more than enough to do if it attempts to achieve the objectives noted above. Such achievement will contribute mightily to the improvement of society and to the development of the student's unique talents. Let us admit at the outset that not all will be done that the public would like to see the school do. Schools by themselves cannot integrate society, cannot remove unsafe housing, cannot eliminate governmental corruption, cannot raise the morals of a community, cannot discipline a host of unruly young people. It is far better to select a few carefully con-

sidered objectives and marshall all the resources of a school district toward the accomplishment of these objectives than to do many things superficially.

In this respect, school people have been among their own worst enemies. The pretense of solving all social ills continues today. Functions that more effectively belong to the home, church, and social agency are made responsibilities of education. Justifiable as some of these activities may be, they should not divert energy or resources from the development of self-governing citizens in a democracy. It is good to be reminded that the school is the only institution specifically established for cognitive development.

Good Teachers Are Essential

It is the task of educational leadership to search out strengths and weaknesses, to nuture strength and spread its power; to define weaknesses and provide a remedy. The pivotal factor is the quality of the teacher; the great objective to create an environment where the best talents of the teacher can deal effectively with the needs of the learner.

Each principal should be aware of those teachers achieving success as well as those who are having difficulty in attaining school district goals. In each case specifics should be noted.

All teachers and principals have the clear obligation to use the services of supervisors and other curriculum specialists. The attainment of goals is not a matter of whim, personal inclination, or inconvenience. Refusal to seek all available resources is indefensible.

To improve instruction, goals and methods must be understood and accepted. Programs should be developed through involvement of those affected; in most cases teachers, students, and parents. Moreover, as an essential part of staff development, a conference involving principal and teacher should be held early in the year for the cooperative development of objectives.

Consistent supervision is needed. The principal should observe in the classrooms to become informed, to offer assistance, to show interest, and to offer encouragement. Bulletins, workshops, faculty meetings, demonstrations, observations, and analysis of records are examples of productive activities. A teacher has a right to look to the principal for educational leadership. The principal unequivocally assumes this responsibility.

Cooperative planning among teacher, supervisor, and principal can occur only where there is mutual trust. The emphasis should not be on following a formula and using precise terminology; rather, it should be on the development of an open relationship where the teacher can work as

a partner, free to express concerns and hope without fear of reprisal. Confidentiality should mark this relationship. Communication should be unhampered, and all essential information necessary for making wise educational decisions should be provided.

Are Teacher Preparation Programs Adequate?

Teachers come to the big city from a host of colleges and universities in many parts of the country. It is unrealistic to expect that all bring sufficient understanding of the nature of their assignment, let alone of the curriculum.

Education, unlike other professions, has surrendered control of teacher preparation at a time when staff people of highest skill and dedication are urgently needed. The normal schools of the past have not been replaced. Then the outstanding high school graduates were given free tuition and preparation that included mastery of curriculum content, intensive practice teaching under master teachers, and a thorough acquaintance with the very children with whom they were to work. Whatever the travails awaiting a beginning teacher, there was the security of knowing the fundamentals of the job.

Today, in too many instances, prospective teachers are taught by those who are removed in time and distance from the realities of the classroom. As a consequence, the teachers of teachers have brought methods courses into disrepute. Without intensive preservice orientation and inservice assistance, the appointee is lost. The complexities of the task turn the idealist into a cynic. Dreams become ulcers. If a school district cannot afford a full program of staff development it must, as a minimum, take the initiative in guiding the college preparation of its pre-school and elementary teachers.

In all probability, the greatest return for the dollar of a school district intent on improving instruction would be in teacher preparation. There are practical possibilities. The first two years of professional training can be taken at a local high school for the meritorious. The deserving but needy would have an opportunity for upward mobility. These prospective teachers would receive free tuition with the understanding that they would teach in the local schools. As they learned, they could save the cost of transportation and board, remain with their families, and continue with part-time jobs in their neighborhoods.

Instruction could be divided with methods courses taught by school district employes; the liberal arts and sciences by college staff. A cooperative relationship with interested local institutions could result in far better preparation than is now the case. A major argument against such relationship is the loss of control by the local college. This is not the is-

sue. The real issue is what is best for the children. Thus far, we have been afraid to address the issue.

Collaboration Is Required

No curriculum can succeed without the support of the teacher and principal. Too often, educational innovations are planned in an office, usually remote from the classroom, and introduced with the expectation that funding will be the major problem. It is not. The past decade has seen an onslaught of governmental and private support for experimentation and a veritable battlefield of fallen projects. The best programs are those developed on a collaborative basis.

Philosophies and techniques cannot be imposed on the people who are expected to provide implementation. On the contrary, the emphasis should be on involving those "on the front line" from the start on a basis of candor and of confidence. In the long run, less time is expended and success has a better chance of survival.

Not only should those dealing directly with students be involved as a matter of respect, but also as a matter of efficiency. There are objectives and curricula that are published officially but the truth is what occurs in the classroom. The greatest untapped resources in education are the ideas and experience of teachers and principals. All too often, the expert with little experience in city schools plans, approves, and controls the programs. No other profession can claim so dubious a practice.

Curriculum guides have been developed for teachers, but the pivotal role of the principal cannot be ignored. Again and again, it has been found that the objectives, character, and "style" of the administrator have a pervasive influence upon the school. If instruction in any area is to be improved, the principal must be committed and knowledgeable. Materials and staff development should be provided to support the principal, not as a manager or public relations expert, but as the educational leader of the school.

The creative teacher and principal should be given every support. Experimentation should be encouraged financially and, more important, psychologically. This encouragement should not be a chance affair.

Centrally, there should be the development of guidelines for seeking funds, the coordination of effort, and dissemination of findings—all in terms of marshalling the resources of an entire school system for the achievement of stated objectives. With a master plan, teachers in different schools would not repeat the same experiment, would receive guidance and support, and would know the results of work elsewhere.

Whatever the proposal, it would fit into an overall design, be scientifically sound, and would contribute to the betterment of learning in all

schools. The school system would, in daily practice, encourage and honor individual creative effort.

Application and support for experimentation can be made simple and systematic. Initiative would be largely at the school level with approval given initially by local administration. Final review by the curriculum office would proceed on these criteria:

- *Educational significance*—Are the objectives in agreement with those of the school district?
- *Soundness of plan*—Do the activities hold promise of meeting stated objectives?
- *Adequacy of personnel and facilities*—Are these available and of sufficient quality to engage in the proposed activities?
- *Economic efficiency*—Is the cost reasonable?

Disposition of the application should be made quickly. Whatever the decision, consultation should take place with the applicant.

Curriculum experimentation, despite worthy purpose, has often been viewed with cynicism by parents. Perhaps explanation can be found in the way experimentation is conducted. When parents are involved from the beginning, where their ideas are solicited and full information provided, parents will prove the strongest allies for a creative approach. In every instance, the child is not "experimented on" without the parent being completely informed, giving willing consent, and engaged in cooperative evaluation.

Until these conditions are present, experimentation should not be conducted. Additional funds, so attractive to hard-pressed urban schools, cannot justify setting aside stated school objectives or discarding successful practice. Instead of a school district taking pride in the amount of outside funding obtained, attention should be on the amount of goal achievement. The purpose, not the dollar, is the major concern of a creative school.

Parents Are Allies

Parents should be seen as educational allies of the school. Particularly where achievement is desperately low, schools must reach out for more support. The natural desire of parents to help their child can be used constructively in an open relationship.

It is reasonable to assume that parental knowledge of the curriculum would result in improved achievement for the child. This hypothesis can be tested by providing a series of after-school or Saturday morning meetings for parents. Each intensive session would present an overview of curriculum content, basic study methods, and human relations within the family structure—particularly parent and child dealing with school

matters. Without additional expenditure of any kind, without ordering new materials or dictating change in the teachers' methods, without any change but parental involvement, improvement should result.

The use of national standardized tests, while providing a basis for comparison with other cities, does not reflect accurately local curricula. Averages and norms established elsewhere may contribute to the development of a science and, at the same time, do injustice to understanding a specific situation. Teachers dealing with defined curricula must know how well their students are learning.

Granted that standardized scores may continue to be used to satisfy public demand, a school district should develop its own curriculum-referenced testing program in all subjects. Content of these tests would correspond with accepted minimum essentials.

Certain schools, even with dedicated staff, continue to suffer low achievement. Such schools cannot be permitted to continue without assistance. Recommendations for improvement can be made by an evaluation team of experts in accordance with plans developed by school, district and curriculum office representatives.

A mathematics program, for example, can be studied by a visiting team or supervisor, expert teacher of another school, colleague, principal of a highly successful but similar school. These people can examine records and materials, interview pupils and teachers, observe teaching. The process need take but a few days, and incur no additional cost for the school district. While the findings may be disputed, the recommendations must be followed unless teachers, principal, and district superintendent can justify otherwise.

A failing school is an unhappy place. Most staffs, because they are conscientious, would welcome such evaluation, provided they are involved from the beginning as full partners and without fear of penalty. In any case, no school not making it should be left dangling in the wind. It is understood, of course, that evaluation, to be taken seriously, must deal with reality. Should books be found in short supply or intensive inservice development be considered necessary, the school district would respond.

In every age, a new freedom is won, adding to the advancement of human fulfillment. Each age uncovers a formerly unrecognized servitude requiring new liberation to set people free. The challenge of our age is to replace a non-achieving student's ignorance with enlightenment, fear with trust, despair with possibility.

The prize is awesome. It is the survival of public schooling; the hope, and the strength of a democracy. Each dedicated educator knows this. That student before us, faltering and fumbling, may hold the cure for a dread disease, write the eternal poem, compose the anthem of liberty,

lead in the paths of peace—when that student is educated.

We can aspire to great heights because so much has already been accomplished—if we but dare to believe in ourselves and in our cause.

Is School Improvement Possible in Urban Areas or Anywhere Else?

by Ronald H. Lewis

THE ERA OF accountability and competency-based education brought enlightenment to some and confusion to others. It allowed many to embrace the "I'm O.K., you're not O.K. theme" with reckless abandon. While the concept of accountability sprang from a desire to embrace better school district management techniques, the competency movement sprang from a relatively simplistic desire to improve test scores.

Unfortunately it has been exemplified by no consensus of thought or rationale. Accountability was couched in the rhetorical lexicon of the educator, while the call for competency is oft-times initiated in legislative chambers, couched in coercive legal terms, and implemented by school administrators and staff who may or may not have had an opportunity to help shape the legislation and who may or may not understand exactly what they're being asked to do.

Parents and students typically assume that *both* concepts are beneficial because of the reasonable nature of the terms—accountability and competency being analogous to motherhood and apple pie. Many of us, unfortunately, embrace *labels* before we examine the inherent substance of the entity that carries the label. We react to problems with quick solutions, rather than engage in the arduous task of examining the multidimensional implications of the proposed solution. I must quickly add, however, that the reactive posture that many educators must take may be

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necessary because we have not assertively taken proactive leadership roles in these very sensitive areas.

Unfortunately, there is a dimension of the confusion/comparison syndrome in the competency movement which is most prevalent in some city systems that exemplifies the final exasperating irony: academic improvement mandated via arbitrary standards, and even worse, arbitrary testing methods. Wouldn't it be refreshing if equally rigorous standards applied not only to students but also to all segments of the educational community—administrators, teachers, board members, parents, the business sector, and the higher education family?

Maybe we would then stop blaming each other for our difficulties in education. Maybe we would then even mandate a proven relationship between the setting of standards, curriculum, instruction, testing, administrative leadership, and resources. Perhaps then the victims—called students—could get about the business of learning minus their labels of deprived, competent, incompetent, learning-disabled, gifted, slow, hyperactive, emotionally dysfunctional, etc.

This discussion of accountability and competence has been going on in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for several years. There are, in fact, several projects that exist as an outgrowth of the sensitivity that exists regarding these popular entities. To its credit, the State of Pennsylvania did not feel it necessary to climb aboard the early and convenient bandwagons that sprang into existence. With all this in mind, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, under the leadership of a new secretary of education, Robert G. Scanlon, has embarked upon its School Improvement effort which calls for every school to become a good school—or a better school. There are 4,000 school buildings in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, so you can imagine the vastness of the venture.

Our motivation is relatively simple: The development of a process that will be comprehensive, but yet reasonable; attainable, but not costly; promising but not Pollyannaish, that applies to Philadelphia as well as to the smallest town. A process that can accommodate the sharing of leadership by educators (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary), agencies, and community representatives. A process that is being developed after a thorough examination of the strengths and weaknesses of other similar movements in California, Michigan, New Jersey, etc.; and after a thorough examination of our motives, our capability, and our probability of success.

We are very sensitive to the form vs. substance trap. In order to begin the shaping of School Improvement ideas, a small group of sincere,

bright, and highly productive young professionals within the Department of Education has framed the following as an initial structure:

What Is School Improvement?

School Improvement is a means of growth for:

- Students
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Teachers of teachers.

School Improvement is a partnership among:

- Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Schools
- School districts
- Intermediate units
- Colleges/universities
- Educational support agencies
- Community.

School Improvement is an ongoing process for the partners that should include:

- An assessment of current programs, services, capabilities
  - effectiveness
  - student growth and achievement
  - staff development
  - resource management
- Development of action plans
  - school buildings
  - school districts
  - intermediate units
  - colleges/universities
  - Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Implementation of plans
  - standards
  - school registration
- Evaluation of efforts
  - self-study
  - third party.

School Improvement is based on these assumptions:

- Schools must provide each student with an equal opportunity to learn
- Schools must teach needed competencies
- Schools must improve if support for public education is to continue
- School Improvement must be an ongoing process
- Colleges and universities must rethink the way they prepare education professionals.

What Is the School Improvement Process?

The School Improvement process includes:

1. An assessment of current programs, services, capabilities

How effective are our programs?
How well are our students doing?
How well trained is our staff?
What are our resources and how well do we use them?

2. Development of action plans
   What are our choices?
   How can we improve?
   What approach will work best?
   Who can help us?
3. Implementation of plans
   How do we set standards?
   Do we become registered? When?
4. Evaluation of efforts
   Are we doing what we planned to do?
   Are we making a positive difference in schools?
   Are we making a positive difference in students?
   What changes still need to be made?
   Where do we go from here?

What Are the Goals of School Improvement?

Goals

1. The best education possible for students.
2. The best trained professionals in schools
   Teachers
   Administrators
   Supervisors
   Educational specialists.
3. The best use of educational resources
   People
   Financial
   Research.
4. Increased confidence in public education
   Educators
   Public
   Legislature.
5. Effective communication between partners
   Students
   Teachers
   Parents
   Institutions of higher education
   Intermediate units
   Pennsylvania Department of Education
   Administrators
   Community
   General public

Legislature
Educational support agencies.

6. "Every School a Good School"—registration by building.

What Does School Improvement Mean for Basic Education?

1. School Improvement means every school building should address questions such as:
   - Can every child read, write and compute? If not, why not, and how can we make that happen?
   - How well do we do on the other Goals of Quality Education? Where are we weak? How do we improve?
   - Is our school well managed? If not, how can we improve?
   - Is this a good school? Does the community agree? How can we make it even better?
2. School Improvement means submission of a school improvement plan for every school building which:
   - Is based on assessment data
   - Is done with community involvement
   - Projects for 5 years
   - Includes self-study and third party judgments.
3. School Improvement for support groups means:
   - Deciding what technical assistance intermediate units, colleges and universities, and the Department of Education need to offer schools
   - Providing long-term, quality help.
4. School Improvement means registering schools involved in the school improvement process.
   - Initial registration means the school has worked with its community, determined its strengths and weaknesses, and prepared its first school improvement plan of action.
   - Registration means the school has completed a year's plan of action, evaluated its efforts, publicized the results and revised the plan for the following year
   - Schools must apply for renewal of registration periodically.

What Should Be the Role of Technical Assistance in School Improvement? (For IUs, Colleges and Universities, and the Department of Education)

A Look at What Is

- Area of focus
  technical services to districts
  instructional programs (special education, vocational education, etc.)
  staff development for teachers and administrators
  curriculum services to schools.
- Complete assessment of what is happening now.
- Identify what needs to be improved.

Planning for Action

- Consider way to improve services.
- Improvement selected.
- Plan for implementing improvements.

Implementation

- Put plan into action for the improved delivery of services which:
  support School Improvement Planning at district and building levels
  provide school districts with information on successful programs
  provide technical assistance and training in School Improvement Planning
  improve special education and vocational education
  provide inservice training for school administrators and teachers
  provide inservice training for the intermediate unit staff to support School Improvement Planning.

Evaluation

- Ongoing evaluation of all projects
  What is happening in schools?
  How are we positively affecting students?
  Where do we go from here?

What's new about all this? Not much at first glance, but when one considers the basic and inherent challenge in a meaningful and productive relationship between research and evaluation laboratories and centers, a department of education, intermediate units, colleges and universities, and local school districts, you can begin to grasp the complexity and promise of our School Improvement effort. If you can also imagine the immense benefit of focused service delivery to the educational process at the local district level, you'll understand our sense of elation about the possibilities in the School Improvement process. There will be less need to continue to blame each other for our difficulties in education and more impetus to identify and implement specific rules which will allow the education enterprise to reestablish its diminishing credibility. "Partnership" need not be consigned solely to the corporate entity.

Our task has just begun. All of the unanswered questions must have answers. The lack of existing structure must be faced. We must identify and incorporate our partners' strengths with the same vigor that we highlight their weaknesses. The intricate and delicate balance between the roles of basic education, higher education, and intermediate units must be sought. Petty citadels of power must be abdicated.

It is our sincere belief that a total educational community and its public can forge an alliance to provide for academic growth for young people, be they rural, suburban, or urban.

Taking Responsibility for City Schools: The State Role in Urban Education

by Mark R. Shedd

THE CITIES OF our country present us with a tragic paradox. They are, on the one hand, the centers of economic, social, political, and cultural creativity and progress. They are the pacemakers of society—the production centers and the gathering places for the majority of our population.

Yet, while they are the heart of our working nation, they have become, all too often, increasingly poor places to live and worse places to go to school.

There are certainly exceptions to that generalization. But, on the whole, the term "urban education" has become synonymous with the bottom of the educational barrel. Urban students are generally poorer; urban schools in worse condition physically; their staffs disheartened and demoralized. There are fewer dollars, more violence, fewer extras, and the outcomes—predictably—are less than those in suburban and other non-urban communities. Inevitably, statewide scores show students in city districts scoring at lower levels than their counterparts elsewhere.

There are explanations. Urban schools reflect urban society. They are poorer because cities have lower tax bases and higher overhead ("municipal overburden" is the current jargon). There are greater concentrations of poor people and members of minority groups—the populations that have traditionally been discriminated against and continue to suffer from social biases. Crime rates are higher in cities where populations are denser, and schools feel the effect. While other districts are

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experiencing broad enrollment declines, urban enrollments show decline in white middle class students and continued growth in the numbers of poor and minority youngsters.

It is a sad reality, and worse, it is one that has been ignored—not only by suburban and rural communities, but until recently, by state government as well. Before the one-man, one-vote principle was established by the U.S. Supreme Court, state governments could easily ignore the problems of the cities—their membership was, more often than not, predominantly from non-urban districts. That was equally true of state departments of education.

Happily, that has changed and continues to change. Not only have cities captured some deserved attention from state governments, but state educational leaders have gradually assumed greater and greater responsibility for addressing the problems of the urban schools.

Admittedly, state departments of education have not always been willing champions of urban schools. Many factors contributed to this new state role: civil rights and political activism of the '60s; federal efforts to desegregate schools and expand opportunities to all students; the growing political power of urban communities. A series of federal court decisions (in Ohio, Michigan, and elsewhere) have involved state governments in the lawsuits and therefore included state agencies in the remedies.

Still, it would be unfair to ignore the many initiatives that state governments have taken to deal with the educational problems of city schools, or the progress made in recent years. The major industrial, urbanized states—including New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and California—have made significant strides, as have many of the southern states such as North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. Their initiatives include funding programs balanced to provide extra dollars to cities, state compensatory education programs, mandates for bilingual education, expanded vocational education and job training activities, and so on.

To use Connecticut as an example, I would point to several state-level initiatives with direct impact on urban educational problems. Governor Grasso's Urban Action Task Force, assembled to direct state resources to solving many urban problems, places high priority on the needs of the schools. Her Human Resources Cabinet—including representatives of education, health, income maintenance, and other human services agencies—likewise provides important assistance to urban school systems.

A forum of urban superintendents meets regularly with state education leaders to identify and address educational problems peculiar to city schools. And other programs—for student health, juvenile delinquency,

school security, career education—bring together many state resources to aid urban systems.

The progress made in recent years to address these issues has been impressive. Nonetheless, I know that urban districts remain the low achievers among the state's school districts. In other words, we haven't solved the problem.

Not long ago, there were those—Coleman and Jencks among the most prominent—who claimed that schools don't make a difference. They said the urban poor will continue to fail in school and there aren't any techniques that schools can or will use to change that.

That was a discouraging conclusion for most educators, and it is made all the more discouraging by the fact that—after years of Title I, Head Start and other urban and compensatory programs—most city schools remain at the bottom of the educational scale.

But optimism dies hard. Those conclusions were disputed, and in the last several years evidence has emerged to support the belief that schools *do* make a difference. A number of studies—notably those of Lawrence Lezotte and Ronald Edmonds on effective schools, and of Irving Lazar on early childhood education—demonstrate that there are "good" effective urban schools, and that urban students can succeed in school. Such schools and programs can be identified by specific characteristics and those characteristics can be duplicated.

Lezotte describes five characteristics of the effective school: it has a sense of mission; its staff members have high expectations of themselves and all their students; there is strong, purposeful leadership; there is considerable parent/community involvement in the school program; and there are sufficient opportunities for learning.

Edmond's list is similar. Successful schools, he says, are those where there is strong leadership, high expectations, a calm atmosphere conducive to work, and a focus on specific instructional goals.

If we know what works, and if programs like Title I are in place to aid city schools, why then are they still not succeeding? And what can be done to change the situation?

My own belief is that the missing ingredient is a sense of responsibility on the part of the entire state, and particularly state government for the well-being of urban communities and schools. I think that needs to change, and I am convinced that each of the 50 state governments must play a key role if public education is to work in the cities.

My premise is this: Public education is a responsibility of state government, a residual power with the states, since the federal constitution does not specifically mention it. In Connecticut, as in many other states, that responsibility is very clearly and specifically assigned by state con-

stitution and statute. If each child in Connecticut, or any other state, is to receive a quality education and is to have equal opportunity to that education, the state must play an active role in addressing educational problems and improving educational programs.

While that responsibility applies to all school districts, it is especially pertinent to urban school systems. Cities and their influences don't confine themselves to boundaries. The metropolitan community of a given city may embrace a number of towns, or even several states. And, as social and economic centers and sources of employment for residents of many communities, cities become the vital organs of any state. It is a fallacy to assume that we can realistically leave the city's problems isolated in the city. Those problems belong to all of us.

So I advocate a strong state role in addressing urban educational problems. And, in saying that, I recognize the paradox inherent in that position.

Successful schools happen, one by one, at the local level. They are the product of a dedicated school community; they rely on individuals and individual responses to problems; and they require the close cooperation of local parents and community members. They aren't born from state edicts.

Despite the seeming contradiction, I believe that states can play a significant role in bringing about improvements in urban school systems, and at the same time respect the fact that each school must make its own successes.

The state's first responsibility, I believe, is to establish a statewide view of education; one that doesn't allow district boundaries and community jurisdictions to throw up barriers to quality education. That statewide view can be expressed in a state funding formula that balances the availability of resources throughout the state. It can be expressed in universal state laws protecting student's rights to quality education. It can be expressed in the form of support for regional programs that transcend community lines to offer opportunities for learning. It can and should be expressed in all policies, laws, regulations, and activities of the state department of education.

A second role, closely related to the first, is for the state to orchestrate the activities and requirements of the educational system in a way that prevents one purpose from detracting from another. The quality of education shouldn't suffer from a desegregation program. The regular school program need not be reduced to open opportunities for handicapped students. These are complementary objectives intended to meet the same goal: equal educational opportunities for all students.

It is essential that that premise be understood and reflected in every

school system in the state. Through training, funding, rigorous law enforcement, and other activities, the state can play a key role in bringing about that understanding and preventing important programs from competing with one another.

Third, I believe the state must play the leader's role in bringing success to urban schools. We know what characterizes an effective school, and every major state program ought to support such activities.

If a sense of mission is essential to a successful school, every school ought to define its mission, and the state should help it do so. If staff members need greater understanding in order to improve their expectations of themselves and their students, the state has a responsibility to provide the needed training and support. Leaders may be born, but leadership skills can be learned and improved, and the state should make necessary training available.

I know that no state edict will cause teachers to devote more time to teaching or bring parents into the school. However, the state can reduce its paperwork demands and help local administrators do the same. And it can reach out to the general public to increase awareness of school problems and successes.

Finally, the state should be an advocate of the cities and their schools. Our urban communities offer a wealth of learning opportunities and instructional resources—to every school in the state. Sometimes it takes funding, sometimes it takes encouragement, sometimes information, to bring teachers and students into the urban community to take advantage of the opportunities there. Those are things the state can provide.

Like every school system in the state, the state education department needs to provide a clear sense of mission, high expectations, strong leadership, broad opportunities, and increased public involvement—the ingredients critical to successful schooling.

And I would hope that each state would establish as a goal the improvement of its urban schools. It would be wonderful if "urban education" came to mean the best, not the worst, in school systems. The city schools would then be what cities have long been—centers of creativity, energy, and progress. That sort of success radiates naturally from the city and we all benefit.

Urban High School Reform in the '80s

by Thomas J. Burns

THE PRINCIPAL IS not without fault! This nation's lack of attention to the problems confronting the urban high school must be acknowledged. To bring about support for reform, urban high school principals must either work together to break down their complex educational, social and political problems into digestible "media bits" or accept the responsibility for the future demise of the city as an educational entity.

Urban educational programs have not changed substantially in the last half century in spite of the fact that contemporary city youth little resemble their predecessors of 50 years ago. Many urban schools are turning out or pushing out underskilled and largely unemployable youth, particularly among the poor and minorities; youth relegated to permanent dependency upon society.

The public must realize that urban secondary schools house some of the most pressing problems confronting public education today. Some of the symptoms of serious educational distress are:

- Achievement scores lower than regional, state, and national averages;
- Alarmingly high dropout rates, particularly among minority teenagers;
- Escalating incidences of in-school violence;
- Limited opportunities for post-secondary study and narrow work options;
- Continuing minority isolation and covert if not overt racism in spite of desegregation mandates;
- A retreat of urban middle class students, black and white, to private schools;

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- A public vote of no confidence which translates into dwindling financial support;
- Urban school district bureaucracies resistant to change; and
- Federal and state government reluctance to help.

The student of today must be described to the students of yesteryear. Today's taxpayers must be made to understand that city kids are different. They are smart in many ways—TV, technology, and complex urban environments make these adolescents "street-wise." It is tough to motivate them in four-walled classrooms for six hours, five days a week.

The schools must capitalize on the rich resources that abound in cities—the museums, libraries, governing bodies, colleges, theaters, recreational facilities, sporting events, and community centers. When this does not happen, many city youth opt for the immediacy of street life to the seemingly meaningless druggery of their schools.

Rigid, traditional program structures that impede responsiveness must be diversified. This is the principal's job, with help from the district, state, and federal governments.

Two basic types of assistance are needed. First, the principal needs to be empowered as "the" authority to lead the individual school effort in designing a specific blueprint for change. Second, the principal needs financial and technical resources to engage the community effectively in preparing for such change.

From a management standpoint, increasing the flexibility of the educational system would not be difficult to achieve. It would simply require commitment to providing what is best for the individual. Each student's learning style must be supported by individualizing instruction in a way which reflects the learner's needs and unique characteristics. The only limit to achievement should be the learner's own potential and not the self-imposed constraints of the system.

To manage the business of reform successfully, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Principals must require the federal government to generate coherent urban secondary education policies that foster local capacity for reform; that give local educators time, funds, and wherewithal to coordinate big city resources on behalf of youth.
2. Principals must seek technical assistance to build viable public relations and outreach programs that articulate school needs, successes, and concerns to the community. Principals can assure parents through regular communication and an open door policy for visits with staff. They must promote staff use of volunteers and community use of school facilities.
3. Principals must establish good working environments. They must develop incentives that reward competence and promote ongoing professional

development. They must conduct systematic, nonpunitive evaluations and give staff immediate feedback and remediation as needed. Principals must encourage site councils to develop clear performance criteria and consistent, enforceable procedures for dismissal.

4. Principals must work cooperatively with staff, students, and parents to build positive school environments with varied educational programs tailored to school strengths and needs. They must lead efforts to reform and innovate and seek technical assistance and training as appropriate.
5. Principals must recognize that sharing authority is in the best interest of the school. They must develop leadership skills that foster participation and innovation. The ultimate success of the school-site model depends on the principal's willingness and ability to carry out council decisions.
6. Principals must explain to parents that teaching in inner city schools is, by all accounts, the toughest kind of teaching. Workplace stress costs these schools their best staff. Junior and senior high personnel are burning out at alarmingly high rates. To a growing number the traditional incentives of paychecks, union benefits, and tenure are not enough. Bold new incentives and reward systems are central to keeping good teachers in urban secondary schools. Drastic improvement in the school workplace is the first, and major, incentive for teachers.
7. Principals must rekindle within their political representatives the realization that schools reflect the socio-economic conditions of the communities they serve. Federal and state governments are intervening with some success in housing, transportation, economic rehabilitation, employment, and elementary education. Although leading social scientists have argued that schools can mitigate the social, economic, and cultural disadvantages of poverty and racial bias, so far their arguments have not been translated into aid for the urban secondary school.
8. Principals must acknowledge that the key to reform is time—time for educators, particularly principals, to exercise educational leadership, to conduct needs assessments, to design comprehensive educational plans, to free teachers to innovate, to enlist the active involvement of parents, students, community members and organizations, and to beat the red tape.
9. Principals must admit that good schools need good principals. The challenge of leading complex urban schools through a time of decline demands sophisticated skills that many educational administrators do not have. Principals need help in human relations, educational law, labor negotiations, site budgeting, energy management, evaluation techniques, and public relations.

School staff members need infusions of new ideas and techniques and new incentives to upgrade skills. They need retraining in multicultural education, adolescent skill development, affective education, career preparation, experiential studies, stress reduction, and motivational activities. Teachers must learn to improve compensatory education techniques for secondary students without compensatory education standards.

Counselors must improve career counseling skills. They need to become familiar with stress reduction techniques for both students and staff. Both groups need training in using school volunteer help effectively and should learn to recognize student skills and integrate them into special tutorial and peer counseling projects.

This kind of professional development can best occur at the site level, with colleagues who face similar problems. This might mean the state and federal governments should finance executive academies for principals to share ideas, success, and failures.

10. Principals must work to influence educational research. Research on adolescence is scant, and the list of necessary research topics discouragingly long. Dollars for research should be channeled to urban secondary learning, including and possibly starting in the junior high. Systematic dissemination methods must channel research to district and school site practitioners and site council planners. School libraries must become repositories of the most current educational research.

If the momentum of progress in America's cities is not to be lost, we must re-examine the needs, aspirations, and conditions that exist. We must look carefully at today's urban secondary schools to reinforce that which is good, useful, and productive; to reshape or discard those practices that are outmoded; and to develop new, creative approaches to emerging needs and opportunities.

The key to educational change is the individual school, with its principal, teachers, students, parents, and community. The basic ingredients for learning and teaching are there.

Urban Schools and the Crisis of Confidence

by Vincent E. Reed

One of the most critical problems facing the urban public school system is the all-too-widespread community perception that it is but another ineffectual government bureaucracy. In the absence of a strong countervailing opinion, this perception has given rise to a crisis of confidence in public education. In this regard the schools are not unlike most other public institutions, including Congress; the courts; and federal, state, and local governments.

Noting the cyclical nature of educational change and stability, Pincus and Williams state that such a cycle is "affected by national trends but has a life of its own, reflecting the characteristics of district leadership, school board policies, neighborhood change, community attitudes, principals, and teachers. Typically, the cyclical flux is greatest in urban school districts, and the process of change there is most likely to be unstable."[1] Given the dynamics which contribute to this kind of instability, it is not surprising that public trust in the urban schools has been profoundly shaken.

The withdrawal of public confidence in our schools may not always be directly expressed, but it is nevertheless real and present. Controversy over such issues as the return to basic skills, social promotion, and graduation competencies are often expressions of a broad concern with the philosophy and purposes of public education.

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1. John Pincus and Richard C. Williams, "Planned Change in Urban School Districts," *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 1979, p. 729.

The cause of this pervasive doubt that the public school . . . is doing its job of preparing our children and youth to be useful and productive citizens cannot be reduced to a single factor. It does seem, however, that there has been a diminishing sense of "family" in the relationship between the school and its community. There would appear to be no longer a feeling that the school is an integral part of the immediate neighborhood. To a large extent this may represent the more broadly perceived disintegration of family and neighborhood noted since the end of World War II, and the concurrent social mobility which has affected not only the stability of the community but the cohesiveness of the school staff.

The aforementioned loss of confidence has occurred at two levels: at the community level served by public education, and at the federal, state, and local levels where the controlling agencies make decisions and exercise powers which profoundly affect the public schools. Among these governing bodies the failure of school systems has been regarded in terms of inefficient management of resources and lack of coherent, well-planned educational programs. While parents on the one hand are concerned that their children do not appear to be learning to read and compute; the legislatures, city councils, and school boards on the other hand are concerned with the mushrooming costs of public education and what appears to them to be a failure of cost effectiveness.

Confronted with everyday evidence, it must be admitted that the quality of public education leaves much to be desired. The quality of classroom instruction is especially inadequate for the interests and needs of many children.

But is this poor quality of instruction a cause or an effect of the present crisis of confidence? Is the quality of public education today poorer than in the past? Or again, is the lack of quality in education merely more noticeable today than in the past? Each interest group will have its own answer.

The large urban public school system, seen almost universally as a powerful but unmanageable bureaucracy, is in fact rapidly losing the power it supposedly has. Indeed, the public schools are acquiring an extraordinary array of masters, among them federal departments and courts, special interest groups, unions, and other employee associations, to name the most visible.

The loss of attributed power is immeasurable. Communities throughout the country are expressing in the strongest language their opinions on the course of public education and the values they attach to it. It is also noteworthy that in Washington, D.C., the city council recently received a report from its staff that the share of the city's budget allocated to the public schools had dropped from 27 percent to 17 percent during the past

decade. Notwithstanding this dramatic decline in the school budget, the mayor set budget marks for 1980 and 1981 that will accentuate this shift.

In summary, the present status of public education is one of alienation and dissaffection. There is a lack of communication between public school systems and the several power structures which currently shape and direct society. Furthermore, school systems are alienated from the communities they are created to serve and the forces within that community which shape public opinion about schooling.

Most unfortunately, however, within the schools and among employees there is the sense of alienation. Warren Bell characterizes this alienation as hopelessness, helplessness and depersonalization, which "combine to create a sense of powerlessness among people in urban schools."[2]

The needs of public education, of course, are many. They are varied and they are almost always stated in terms of cost. But setting cost aside, the fundamental need of public education, it seems, is for the reintegration of the schools into their communities. This need cannot be reduced simply to community control or to political strategems. Reintegration is seen here as the reestablishment of mutual confidence in, and an interactive process between, home and school. It is seen as a return to care and concern, and a reconsideration of the normative values of public education.

The public schools need, indeed must earn, the public's confidence in their ability both to manage resources, particularly in these times of economic caution, and to provide adequate and meaningful education for all of the children of the community.

There is an immediate need for greater, more active, interest and concern by the community for its schools. These, in turn, translate into involvement, not merely by the particular parents served, who often represent those elements with the least political or economic power in the community, but by the body politic. If concern for the public schools is to be productive, it must be felt also by those who can turn that concern into meaningful action. The entire community, especially the decision-making forces within that community, must reevaluate the needs of public education in the face of the many other competing social needs and demands, and restore and reaffirm the priority of public education.

In order to return to public favor, the schools must first establish the basis for the renewal of confidence in their ability to provide quality edu-

2. Warren E. Bell, "Obstacles to Urban School Renewal," *Theory Into Practice*, April 1979, p. 68.

cational programs. As a very basic step the public schools must ensure sound management of their financial and personnel resources, and must demonstrate sound management practices to a community which feels itself hard pressed to pay the costs of schooling its children.

It also lies within the direct and immediate control of public schools to move boldly toward eliminating, or at least reducing, the jargon, technical obscurity, and other alienating devices which public education has developed over the years, often simply to protect itself from public scrutiny and accountability. There must be a return to simple, plain talk about education and children, where, for example, children are children and not "clients."

Most importantly, public education must turn its attention from excessive concern about school plants and technical hardware, which have improved remarkably in recent years, and concentrate on the improvement of classroom instruction. Emphasis on the quality of teaching must be maintained to the subordination of almost every other concern. Nor can we allow ourselves the comfort of turning our attention from teaching competency to other less aggravating and controversial subjects of public education.

Teachers are at the vital center of public education, and next to the students have suffered most because of its alienation from the community. Teachers must not, and indeed cannot, be issued simple mandates for improvement of classroom instruction and management. They must come to experience the positive force of approbation from both the system and the community they serve. They must not only regard themselves as an essential part of the system, but also feel real pleasure in the success of the system.

Failure is a pervasive social disease. When schools fail, teachers fail and children fail. When that failure is repeated it erodes the confidence of both children and teachers. Children may be left with a sense of failure and diminished self-worth that may affect them for the remainder of their lives. Teachers who do not advance through the system, who do not experience concomitant success with the children, may drift further into failure or—sensing imminent failure—may leave education for other, less frustrating careers. If such a cycle of failure is to be broken, the public schools must develop and nurture successes. They must turn away from patching and mending and excusing, to the cultivation of a few, albeit modest, successes which may lead to a larger sense of their accomplishments.

There is no substitute for the pleasure we all feel in success, regardless of its degree or importance. And perhaps the perception of successful things happening in our schools, though it may not restore absolute

confidence, will at least encourage patience while such confidence has a chance to grow.

Success need not, indeed should not, be of the "model" or "demonstration" kind. It ought to be real and substantial and part of the system. It must surface and be experienced at the classroom level by children and teachers alike. Above all it must be educational success, for which there is no substitute—neither social, nor dietetic, nor even economic success.

Success in education, however, must proceed from a sound management base. Before it does anything else, for example, the school system must assure the public that it can get employee checks out on time, get textbooks into the classroom before school starts, and get all the other management tools essential to effective instruction in place and in operating order.

To the end of reviving public confidence in our schools, administrators must understand and cultivate the media, for the media are the primary communication link with the community. This is public relations in the most positive sense of the term. Encouraging the press, television, and radio to offer a balanced presentation of news about the public schools is a necessary condition for recovering the public's trust in public education, especially urban education.

The schools must be open, even painfully honest, in their reports to the community. But with this openness and candor should come opportunities not only to examine their shortcomings, which have always achieved media attention with little or no effort, but also to draw note to their accomplishments.

If I have dwelt overlong on success in our schools, it has been to underscore the familiar truism that "success breeds success." Nothing will revitalize urban education more, nothing can inspire public confidence in the educational enterprise more, than the exhilarating habit of success.

School Public Relations: A Vital Tool in Strengthening Confidence

by Larry Ascough

THERE WAS A TIME when education journals didn't have space for articles about public relations. After all, what did PR have to do with pedagogy?

But that was in a more peaceful era. In recent years, as public education encountered one problem after another, an interest in the art of public relations began to grow. Suddenly it became a matter of survival. And today, nearly every education periodical includes a reference to declining public confidence in schools and suggests PR strategies for attacking the problem.

In fact, educational leaders and observers are placing the challenge at the top of their priority lists for the '80s. Mary Berry, former assistant secretary for education, said that declining confidence is the greatest problem facing American education in the next decade. AFT President Al Shanker went another step, proclaiming "being able to maintain a public school system" the major issue of the 1980s.

Perhaps Fred Hechinger of *The New York Times* best put it in perspective in a *Saturday Review* article:

> America is in headlong retreat from its commitment to education. Political confusion and economic uncertainty have shaken the people's faith in education as the key to financial and social success. This retreat ought to be the most pertinent issue in any examination of the country's condition . . . at stake is nothing less than the survival of American democracy.

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While practitioners and long-time advocates of educational public relations find all this talk about public confidence gratifying, they are also concerned about placing too much faith in the medicinal powers of PR. The question isn't whether schools can survive without PR, but rather can they survive even with it.

Public relations is not a panacea for all the problems facing education. Unless an institution provides a good product and performs in the best interests of its consumers, normal PR efforts are wasted. If public education is to survive, it will require a combination of truly effective schools and new and creative PR strategies.

Does that mean city schools are destined to go down for the third time during the decade of the '80s? Hardly. Strange as it may seem to some, urban educators probably have a better chance than others of putting the necessary elements together.

Despite seemingly insurmountable social and economic problems, the nation's city school systems have been quietly but surely turning things around. Urban settings are rich with PR opportunities, including resources that do not exist in suburban and rural areas. The time is right for real progress, if urban educators become proactive and take advantage of their educational successes and public relations possibilities.

For those who care to look behind the continuing negative headlines, outstanding examples of teaching and learning can be found in urban settings from coast to coast. In his in-depth study of urban education, former Chicago University Dean Francis S. Chase found evidence of what he termed "a new era of excellence." The two-year review of city schools, funded by the Spencer Foundation, chronicled a number of promising trends.

"Urban education has an inner vitality which is generating innovative programs and strategies of great potential even in the midst of extremely adverse conditions," Chase reported. "We are discovering many administrators, teachers, and other staff members who are demonstrating ability to arouse zest for learning in students from diverse backgrounds, including those whose histories have been marked by failure, loss of hope, and/or anti-social behaviors."

The study is impressive and promising. As Chase notes, in spite of problems, urban schools can produce. In short, the renaissance of American public education could take place during the next decade in our cities . . . if we can combine excellence in learning with excellence in PR strategies. Although the two must go hand in hand, from this point on let's concentrate on the latter.

Assuming your school and/or school system is getting its educational performance in shape, what must be done to get the public relations act

together? Begin by wiping out all the stereotypes and preconceived notions you have about PR.

While media coverage has an impact upon public relations, PR is a lot more than clippings and air time. Educators must realize that the news media focuses on news, and news is the unusual: the failures and problems of society and its institutions. As much as we might wish it otherwise, that's the way it is and always will be.

Good public relations isn't just publicity and focusing on the good news. It's an attitude, a positive atmosphere, listening to and involving people, accentuating the positive while analyzing and improving on the negative.

John Wherry, executive director of the National School Public Relations Association puts it this way:

> The school district public relations process is a complex, demanding one. It serves in many respects as the conscience of the school district, winning support from internal and external publics alike by seeing that the right thing is done—by demanding the kind or responsible institutional behavior that commands public support.
>
> Through a planned and systematic two-way process of communication with our internal and external publics, we build morale, goodwill, cooperation, and support by letting our constituents and our staff know what our goals are, our achievements and our plans, by getting their reactions, then making adjustments as needed.
>
> In a nutshell, public relations is a matter of doing the right thing and making sure that people know about it.

While all of this might sound idealistic, don't turn up your nose if you haven't tried it. Considering urban education's current image, what have you got to lose?

If you are willing, the following thoughts about PR for urban education may also be worth considering.

Get Organized

You don't have a chance unless plans for PR are at least as well thought out as other programs. Who are your major audiences? What do you want them to know? How do you best reach them? What about methods for systematic feedback from them?

Knowing where you want to go and how is essential. Providing the resources, both financial and human, is also a must. Currently, suburban districts seem to employ more PR professionals than their city counterparts.

Can we afford not to have qualified professionals planning and implementing our PR efforts? No! Hire the best available, and direct

them to work with staff and citizens in developing written plans for the district's major programs as well as each individual school.

Focus on Employees

There is an old saying that good public relations start at home. This is particularly true in urban schools. Everyone is a member of the PR team. However, the school system has to make employees aware of that responsibility and provide them with the skills and tools to do the job.

Provide staff training and insist that everyone stay positive and informed. The latter is impossible unless an effective internal communications program is in place. Along this line, urban schools have another ace in the hole—large employee organizations. And while such groups may have had their differences with your institution in the past, current economic conditions demand that you learn to live together.

Good public relations is in the best interest of all concerned. Establish new alliances and efforts with employee groups to improve the image of your school system.

Use Available Channels

There is no point in inventing new communication vehicles when cities are overflowing with them. Every organization, business, and special interest group has its own channels of communications. Once you determine who your primary audiences are, utilize their communication vehicles to get your message across. For example, business house organs, organizational newsletters, and other such communication devices are a natural. Find out what their interests are in your schools and focus on them in getting your message across to these publics. Not only can you save money, but you will improve the credibility of your message since such publications have more believability than anything you can produce.

Form New Coalitions

Many people want to get involved in your school system. Help is there for the asking. You've got to get organized to take advantage of the available resources. Civic groups, the religious community, service organizations, higher education, business and industry—all have their own interests in the schools. In particular, the businesses have a real economic interest in good schools. A strong education system is good business. Promote this idea.

Outside groups and organizations can provide human and material resources you can't afford, and some things you couldn't buy even if you had the money. Beef up the volunteer effort. Ask for curriculum advice. Set a goal of getting every school adopted. You are limited only by your

imagination. But one of the most important benefits is the communication provided through involvement—and since less than one-third of adult Americans now have children in school, this is a group you may never reach in any other way.

Establish Listening Posts

Listening is often the most important part of the communications process, and the toughest. To make it easier, create opportunities for others to communicate with you—at all levels in the system. Challenge program managers and principals to develop feedback mechanisms for their consumers. Work to make advisory groups more effective. Formalize the rumor mill. Keep your eyes and ears open at community meetings. Skim neighborhood newspapers and publications for trends and concerns. Invite key citizens and employees to breakfast or lunch. Keep track of and analyze concerns through phone calls, letters, and visitors. Constantly ask for feedback through questionnaires in newsletters, opinion sheets at meetings, and regular rap sessions. Aggressively promote such ideas and follow up on messages you receive.

Focus on Learning

Since time and resources are limited, make sure your PR efforts reinforce the major mission—the instructional program. Develop basic descriptions in plain English of learning objectives in all subject matter areas. Explain your instructional goals, and let the parents know how they can communicate with schools, principals, and teachers about the instructional effort. In addition, use creative ways to tell parents what they can do to reinforce programs through good study skills, learning activities at home, and the use of community resources. Offer classes in areas of obvious parent concern—career planning, drug abuse, self-discipline, and the like. In addition, consider giving teachers extra time to work with parents. Ask employees to cooperate by releasing parents for conferences or by sponsoring parent courses at work.

Promote Urban Strengths

Concentrate on things the urban school setting offers that can't be found any place else—cultural and social diversity. Work with chambers of commerce and neighborhood improvement groups to promote the advantages of urban life. It's in your best interest to get people moving back into the city.

Modern problems may even be a blessing in disguise. After all, the energy crisis may cause people to live closer to their work, and inflation will probably interest private school parents in taking a second look at

public education. You need to promote the wide variety of programs that urban schools can offer. Work with realtors, relocation services, and others who sell your school system day in and day out, for better or for worse. Don't apologize for urban problems. Sell the strengths.

Seek Help

As you pursue new and creative public relations ideas, don't be bashful in looking for and seeking out all the help you need. Urban settings offer many resources. Public relations firms and professional communication organizations frequently offer free assistance to worthwhile public endeavors. In addition, businesses will probably be willing to assist you by offering public relations professionals to advise and assist.

In addition, their training staffs might be available to help your employees in a variety of ways. Also, many resources and ideas are available through the National School Public Relations Association, and other professional organizations.

Francis Chase puts our challenge in perspective in the summary of his study:

> We are a long way from the education needed in our culturally diverse, highly technological, and environmentally threatened cities; but we may be closer than at any time in our history to an education which will develop the full potential of all our people. I predict that the next great advance in education will take shape from the trauma in our cities. We must continue our endeavors to identify needs and reach out to meet them.

Certainly, new and creative PR efforts can help in both identifying and reaching out. We owe it to ourselves and those we serve to do no less.

The Importance of Community Support in Improving Urban Schools

by John C. Fareira

THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, and nurturing of good and effective relationships between the community and the school are critical tasks that must be handled effectively by all public schools, especially urban public high schools. The image of our public schools has never been poorer, as perceived by our communities, than it is today. Yet, our programs have never been better. At a time when greater financial support for our schools is critical, our communities are offering less financial help, complaining more, and demanding more from our schools. If public school systems are to survive as viable educational institutions a massive public communication and school improvement movement must take place.

The school community includes not only the parents of the students but other interested community members, local churches, business, industry, politicians, agencies, and special interest groups. Edison High School in Philadelphia has several very successful innovative programs, and the common thread that runs through all of these programs is strong community support and involvement.

The Academy of Applied Electrical Sciences was started six years ago at Edison. It was jointly planned, funded, and implemented by the School District of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Urban Coalition, Edison High School personnel, the Bell Telephone Company, and Phila-

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delphia Electric Company. The program has an enrollment of 100 students in grades 10 through 12. It is designed to provide an individualized program in electronics for each student that will result upon graduation in a job, enrollment in a two-year technical electronics program, or enrollment in a four-year electrical engineering college program.

Students progress at their own rates, and begin working after school in our "Edison Company" when they are able, depending upon how many work contracts have been secured. Philadelphia Electric Company provides a full-time instructor each year to work with Edison personnel. Sears Roebuck Company provides each student with a tool box and tools that become the property of the student upon graduation. Our Edison Company has regular work contracts with Bell Telephone Company, Exide Battery, General Electric Company, Philadelphia Gas Works, and other industrial concerns.

A city-wide advisory committee comprised of school district, business, and industrial representatives meets regularly to help secure funding and set directions for the Academy. All academic subjects such as English, science, math, social studies, etc. are taught from an electronics approach. Students in the Edison Company earn the minimum hourly wage, and work at school three hours each day after school, and five hours per day during the summer. Their summer work is preceded by one and a half hours of classroom instruction.

These students attend school all year with the exception of the last week of August. Retention rate in the program is 85 percent, and average daily attendance is between 92 percent and 96 percent. This is 25 percent higher than the school-wide average. During the summer of 1978 our Academy was honored as an exemplary program on the national level.

Across the street from Edison in 1975 were 10 abandoned and dilapidated houses. Four years later our abandoned housing rehabilitation program is in full operation. The school district has purchased five of these houses for one dollar each from the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, and Edison students are rehabilitating them for sale.

This exciting program is designed to help our students acquire building construction skills while involving them directly in rebuilding their community. The program was started by the joint efforts of the Mayor's Committee for Science and Technology, the School District of Philadelphia, Edison High School personnel, the building trades construction union, the Negro Trade Union Leadership Council, the Redevelopment Authority, Philadelphia Electric Company, Philadelphia Gas Works, the block captain, and committees of the 2700 block of North Eighth Street, Philadelphia National Bank, the Pennsylvania State Bureau of Vocational Education, and the Philadelphia Department of Licensing and Inspec-

tion. Three journeymen on the site work with school personnel and students. This program exemplifies the kind of community commitment and involvement that we need to make our high schools what they should be.

The retention rate in this program is 80 percent, and daily attendance is 85 percent. Many of the students had attendance figures of 60 percent before they entered this program.

Because our students are involved in rebuilding their community there has been no vandalism at the housing sites. We plan to eventually rehabilitate and sell all 10 of the houses. We sell the houses at the market prices of homes in the area ($9,000) to low-income buyers selected by lottery. The neighbors on the same block have begun painting their homes and improving them in other ways as they experience a growing sense of pride for their residential area.

Approximately seven years ago we planned, proposed, secured funding, and implemented a dropout prevention program. This off-site program has an enrollment of 200 students whose attendance records indicate that they will not graduate from high school. The program is individualized, with a strong counseling component. Community resource workers are employed to maintain continuous contact with the parents of these students. We have found that many parents of potential dropout students were dropouts themselves, and although they want their children to graduate they are too busy surviving to support their child's school. Therefore it is difficult to keep them actively involved in the school. Our community resource people are liaisons between these parents and the school.

We also have a strong career component which places students at career sites for a full week while they learn about the job functions and the employment opportunities available at each site. These sites include Episcopal Hospital, the Philadelphia Zoo, WCAU Television station, Coca-Cola Company, and IBM. The career site activities are handled by personnel from the specific business or industry. The impact of this community participation is reflected in the fact that approximately 55 percent of this 100 percent potential dropout group have completed high school and received their diplomas during the past several years.

Another exciting program at our school is really for the community. We are in the second year of our school for all ages program, which enrolls adults who are at least 25 years old and do not have high school diplomas. These adult students attend classes with our regular students, and they must complete regular requirements for their high school diplomas. We saw the need for this program because so many of our District Five adults do not have diplomas and many of them cannot attend night school.

The adults in this program have become some of our best ambassadors. Their experiences in our school have been positive for our entire school family. They have spoken so positively to their friends and neighbors about their experiences in our school that we cannot accommodate all of the adults who wish to enroll. We have 35 students enrolled this year and a waiting list of 40. Eight of our adult students qualified for the honor roll at the end of our first 1979-80 marking period.

Each year, 10 Edison students spend the month of January on the campus of Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa. They complete two 30-day college courses, and a packet covering the work they miss at Edison. During this same time 10 students from Westminster College come to District Five to live in the homes of community residents and provide tutoring and other services at Edison and different community agencies.

This program enables Westminster students to become familiar with inner-city schools and communities. It also enables some of our community people to meet, live with, and work with college students from suburban and rural backgrounds. These students are usually white, and the community folks they live with are usually black or Hispanic, so the program also fosters good human relationships.

This program allows our students to have experiences that are completely new to them. They are 300 miles away from home, on a college campus, taking college courses, in a predominantly white rural setting. Sometimes their entire outlook on life is changed. This program has a positive effect on everyone involved.

The community participation I have discussed thus far has dealt with school programs. I'm now going to discuss some ongoing activities that facilitate community participation and have helped improve our school.

Edison Community Advisory Board

We have a Community Advisory Board which meets once a month, and more frequently when necessary. Membership includes students, teachers, ministers, parents, administrators, agency people, and interested community folks. There is no limit on board size. None of the officers are teachers or administrators. Our advisory board works with us to resolve problems. Members attend school programs and activities, make recommendations for school improvement, and join with us to fight for needed resources. ECAB members will often attend school board meetings to speak on behalf of our school. This board has helped improve our school through its recommendations, support, cooperation, rumor control, and active participation.

Parent Communication

We have two parent visitation nights during our school year, where parents can meet directly with teachers. We also have an open invitation to our parents to visit our school without prior notice to observe a program or to follow their child's schedule of classes. Our staff members send letters and notes home on a regular basis, and they also telephone parents frequently.

Every one of our 2,000 parents received a personal telephone invitation to attend a recent parent-teacher conference night. As a result we had twice our normal turnout.

We have school-community coordinators through Title I funding who visit homes every day to talk with parents. These coordinators also hold frequent meetings in the school for small groups of parents. These meetings provide parents with information about school programs, special education techniques, sex education, drugs, outstanding student accomplishments, and school tours. We also have cluster meetings in the community where one parent invites 10 to 15 neighbors to meet with the principal and the school-community coordinators.

When we have our honor roll, good attendance, and achievement awards we always have a reception for the students and their parents. We publish a parent newsletter monthly and a parent handbook once a year. These items are sent to each home. Since we are 40 percent Hispanic, all school-parent correspondence is in English and Spanish.

Career Days

Each year we have two school-wide career days. These activities involve from 50 to 70 representatives of colleges, business, industry, the city government, and other potential employers. Our first career day focuses on formal education opportunities after high school graduation, and the second focuses upon the various areas of employment available to the high school graduate.

Political Candidates

Whenever an election campaign is in progress for local or city-wide offices we invite all of the candidates to our school to speak with our students, to discuss issues and answer questions. We usually invite them to appear separately, and they usually accept our invitation. This gets candidates into our school, exposes them to our students, and involves our students more actively in the political process. Eligible students can register to vote at the school.

Title I Parent Advisory Group

Title I regulations require a parent advisory group which observes Title I programs and meets with the principal at least twice yearly. This group visits our school for observation and evaluation of our Title I programs at least four times a year. These parents have also become ambassadors for our school. They keep other parents and their neighbors informed about activities at Edison.

Home and School Association

We have an active home and school association comprised primarily of parents and some staff members. The association works closely with our school to help provide resources and benefits for students. Members also attend school board meetings and selected faculty meetings.

Agency Relationships

We have a cooperative and ongoing relationship with many agencies, including recreational, drug abuse prevention, drug rehabilitation, ethnic pride groups, mental health, public health, family service, social services, child abuse, YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, neighborhood action groups, local businesspersons, civic associations, etc. They help to prevent and resolve many student, school, and community problems.

One example of this school-agency cooperation is our mental health van. On a weekly basis one of our mental health agencies has a large van at the school which is used for parent-student-social worker-psychologist conferences that have been arranged by our school counselors. This program has minimized and prevented many serious student and family problems.

Motivation Parent Group

Our motivation program includes the majority of our college preparatory students. This program is for students who show good college potential but are either underachieving or need additional basic skills instruction and cultural experiences to help them realize their potential. These students receive extra math and English daily by attending school for an additional class period. Their cultural experiences include many trips during and after school hours. Parents act as chaperons on most of these trips.

There are also instructional enrichment activities at local colleges and museums on weekends and evenings. Our motivation parent's group meets on a monthly basis to receive information about our "M" program, suggest recommendations for improvement, plan participation in program activities, and to help obtain resources for our "M" program.

In conclusion, it is important to note several aspects of community involvement programs that must occur if they are to be effective.

1. Community involvement programs must include more than parents. Church people, business, industry, colleges, neighborhood agencies, city agencies, community organizations, civic associations, are just some of those who should be involved with our schools.
2. Do not rely upon the parent-teacher or home and school association as the only parent group. Make sure you involve several different parent groups.
3. Make sure all visitors to your school are treated with respect and warmth and are attended to as quickly as possible. If you are likely to have non-English speaking people coming to your school be sure to have bilingual personnel and materials available.
4. Do not form any community or parent advisory group with the purpose of using the group as a "rubber stamp" for your policies and practices. Be prepared to accept constructive criticism, suggestions for improvement, and differing opinions. An honest response to recommendations in a reasonable period of time is critical. Make sure that members take an active part in the group's activities and develop a feeling of importance as well as gaining an understanding of how difficult it is to attain certain goals.
5. When involving the community in any school improvement activity make sure they are involved very early, if not at the beginning of the process. When community folk can "buy into" a process they know they are a real part of the process and chances of success are greatly enhanced.
6. Recognize those community people who have provided outstanding, regular, or unusual service to your school. A 10 or 15-minute award ceremony will reap hours of service and benefits from the community people who receive the awards.
7. Make sure community people know that they are welcome at your school. Encourage and invite them to come in, and when they do, make sure they feel welcome.
8. The principal should have some personal involvement with every community group that functions with the school on a regular basis. This contact should occur in the school ***and*** in the community.

Motivating Students in Urban Schools

by Robert L. Schain

LET'S BEGIN WITH the basic premise we have heard again and again—all children can learn. Not only is this absolutely true, but it also follows that all children really want to learn.

The question that troubles most educators in urban school settings is how to create the "proper learning conditions in our schools." While the answer to this question will vary according to the particular school, there are some basic factors that we must face, no matter what school we are dealing with. The experience at George W. Wingate High School in Brooklyn, N.Y. (an inner-city school with an all-minority student body), illustrates the kinds of procedures and policies than can lead to effective education in urban schools.

Students must be motivated—to school, to the courses they take, and to the value of what they are studying. They must also develop the feeling that the school staff is really concerned about them and that they are doing their best to help students achieve success. Make no mistake about the fact that students know when their teachers care and when they are doing a good job. Students know whether the work they are doing in school is of value to them.

At Wingate High School, we have developed several procedures to "turn students on" to school. For one thing, we developed programs to meet specific learning needs of many students—needs that exist in almost any urban school. These needs deal with basic skills—reading, writing, and computing—and with special needs such as learning English (for foreign-born students). Special reading programs were set up to deal with

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the functional illiterates (our Basic Skills Mini-School), with those whose reading scores were more than two grades below reading level, and with all students in every class regardless of their reading competence. Teachers had to be trained and/or retrained to develop new teaching skills to help students learn to read better.

For the foreign-born with limited English proficiency, we developed a sophisticated bilingual program that ranged from the Wingate English Academy (a total immersion in English), to bilingual courses, after-school activities, and career-based programs.

We also dealt with the special needs of entering students with eight or nine years of school failure before coming to Wingate. Our Alpha Program aimed at finding out what these students were interested in and planning their programs on the basis of these identified interests.

For the superannuated students who had achieved no significant progress toward their diplomas, we set up the Wingate Prep Program that would lead to a high school equivalency diploma. This diploma, issued by New York State, can be used in the same way and for the same purposes as the diploma issued by any New York high school. In this program, students who had almost given up any hope for a diploma, seeing the possibilities of earning a diploma in a reasonably short time, develop a real interest in school.

In addition to programs that met learning needs, we also developed curriculum areas around career interests of many students. We believed that students who saw a related value to their courses would develop a greater interest in learning. Let me illustrate this philosophy by briefly describing some of our interest-based curriculum areas.

We have a three-year Medical Science Curriculum in which students are bloc-programmed into courses based on medical science themes. For example, in the English courses, students will read literature dealing with medical themes. In their senior year students serve as interns in local medical facilities one day a week.

Our Flight Training Program is another popular interest-based curriculum area. Students in this three-year program study ground training and operate flight simulators at the school. Their other academic work is related to flight, e.g., science courses in aerial navigation and meterology and mathematics courses in math skills needed for flying. One day a week these students are given flying lessons at one of the metropolitan airports.

The Television-Radio Institute also operates on the same plan as the other interest-based curriculum areas. These students create television productions, make teacher-training videotapes, and operate the school's internal radio station, ***WWIN***.

There are other such programs at Wingate. However, the point is

that these programs have aroused tremendous interest among the students. They see quite clearly how this kind of schoolwork is related to their life plans. One significant result has been the development of positive discipline at Wingate. Students act responsibly and come to school to learn. The halls are clear, disruption is almost nonexistent, and the ambience of the school is remarkably positive. Attendance is relatively high. The school building, a 25-year old white brick, banjo shaped structure (with 46 outside doors), is in perfect shape. There are no graffiti, no broken windows, no vandalism, and there have been hardly any weekend break-ins for years. Most of our graduates go to college.

There is another significant dimension in developing the kinds of educational programs described above. There is a need to involve the staff in developing such programs. An effective staff development program will make use of the creativity of the school professionals by opening doors and giving free rein to their ideas. Their involvement in the identification of student needs and interests, in planning programs to meet these needs and interests, in becoming involved in the implementation of these plans, and in monitoring the progress of these programs will make for a better, more interested, more involved staff.

It is important for principals to understand that the professional staff includes many talented and creative people. A successful principal will develop techniques and procedures for allowing the staff to use their abilities and interests in the interest of better educational programs and better instruction.

The foregoing description of programs at Wingate High School is only part of the story of developing effective urban schools. Some other important areas are student participation in policies and practices, parent and community involvement in the school, human relations, public relations, and improvement of instruction. However, policies and practices that motivate students to learn are basic to any school system, and particularly significant to urban schools where for years students have been "turned off."

The Wingate High School experience has demonstrated the basic truth of this proposition. It is a model worth trying. We at Wingate are prepared to lend our expertise to others who may wish to replicate some of our techniques and experiences.

Tips on Using Central Office Support Staff

by Sydney Weiss

A PERSON WOULD have to have the wisdom of Solomon in order to administer, without assistance, the modern senior high school curriculum with its multiplicity of subject offerings and programs. That is why I view the instructional supervisor as an indispensable aide in my efforts to provide the students at our school with the curriculum offerings that will best serve them.

I must confess to having a bias in favor of this position, because I was an instructional supervisor in the Philadelphia public school system before becoming principal of an inner-city high school. My experiences in that post, as well as my subsequent dealings with supervisory personnel as principal, have colored my thinking about how a principal can best utilize the services of the instructional supervisor and other education specialists.

I recall an incident that took place many years ago when I was engaged in my duties as a supervisor. I was called in by the principal of an inner-city high school who can be best described as a "traditionalist." He was concerned about the teaching techniques of a young teacher on his staff who was "not doing any teaching but giving out pieces of paper all the time." Those were the days when individualized instructional techniques were not in vogue.

I stayed with the teacher for a couple of days and discussed the matter with him. I was pleased to find that much of what he was doing made a lot of sense.

The school had a very high absentee rate and many of the students in

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his classes were present one day and absent the next. The teacher had done a tremendous amount of work in preparing packets of instructional materials to be used on an individualized basis. These materials were appropriate and educationally sound. They were written at a grade level that was comprehensible to the students.

After much discussion with the principal, I was able to get him thinking about the merits of the individualized approach. Prior to that time he felt that the teacher must be lecturing and demonstrating most of the time in order to achieve desired results.

Helping New Teachers

Central office personnel can be usefully employed in the indoctrination of new teachers and in assisting them in their fledgling efforts. The principal cannot possibly be an expert in science, mathematics, English, foreign languages, career education, social studies, alternative programs, and the host of other offerings available in today's senior high school. The fortunate principal will have people on the school staff who can render assistance in these matters. Vice principals, department heads, and guidance counselors are examples of the specialists within the school who can provide the expertise to enable the instructional program to move ahead.

At times, however, such expertise can best come from central office personnel with particular experience in handling special problems. The business education department head, for example, may have experience in the area of accounting and record keeping but a limited knowledge of stenography. To render help to a new teacher of shorthand, the principal should call upon a supervisor who is proficient in that area.

Curriculum revision should be an ongoing process. In our school I have allocated the maximum number of meetings allowable under our contract for departmental meetings so that teachers can have the time to update subject matter taught in the classroom. Often it is helpful to have curriculum specialists present at these meetings to guide and enrich the efforts of the school personnel. These specialists are usually involved in the writing of citywide courses of study and are knowledgeable about their individual disciplines.

In inner-city schools such as ours, off-site alternative programs are common. I have been involved in the creation of some of these programs at our school and have found the people from "downtown" helpful to us in obtaining sites for our alternative programs and in appropriating the necessary furniture, equipment, supplies, and the like. They have also been instrumental in helping us develop relationships with other outside agencies.

In addition to instructional supervisors, most large school districts employ a myriad of specialists in noninstructional areas. Personnel aides, research specialists, architects, lawyers, accountants, desegregation specialists, transportation assistants, dieticians, federal program coordinators, maintenance and operations people, and computer technologists are all examples of the great variety of specialists who are available to the principal. The primary purpose of these individuals is to assist the line officers who are directly involved in the education of the young people in the schools.

In this age of computer science the principal is fortunate to have access to people and machines that can provide data not available in the past. Research findings, test results, attendance facts, and other pertinent information concerning our pupils and staff members make the principal's job infinitely more rewarding.

The modern principal is not only an educational leader but also a manager of sorts. To be effective the principal must learn where to find help in the most direct and expeditious way. This is especially true in a large urban school system. The principal must, of necessity, become familiar with the structure of the central office to know where to go for help in solving the problems that are part of every day.

The proper utilization of specialists can greatly enhance the labors of the principal in meeting the needs of the school. It behooves the principal to establish good working relationships with support personnel in order to direct a viable and dynamic educational program.

The Effect of Negative School Environment on Urban Youth

by Andrew Robinson

> If Stephen began to fiddle around during a lesson, the art teacher generally would not notice him at first. When she did, both he and the children around him would prepare for trouble. For she would go to his desk with something truly like a vengeance and would shriek at him in a way that carried terror.
>
> "Give me that! Your paints are all muddy! You've made it a mess. Look at what he's done! He's mixed up the colors! I don't know why we wasted good paper on this child."
>
> Then: "Garbage! Junk! He gives me garbage and junk! And garbage is one thing I will not have."
>
> Now I thought that the garbage and junk was very nearly the only real art-work in the class. I do not know very much about painting, but I know enough to know that the art teacher did not know much about it either and that furthermore, she did not know or care anything at all about the way in which you can destroy a human being.
>
> Stephen, in many ways already dying, died a second and third and fourth and final death before her anger.[1]

How OFTEN is the above scene or a similar scenario acted out in urban schools? Such a question certainly cannot be answered definitively.

However, each time the scene is played, a youngster is propelled further down the road of failure. The path to failure, as we know it, is filled with disillusionment, humiliation, and alienation. The role of the

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1. Russell K. Stephens, "Schools for Failure," *Journal of Social Reform*, 1974.

urban school must be seriously questioned if it contributes overtly or covertly to the development and maintenance of these inhumane conditions.

Philosophically, public education has as a primary function the preparation of the nation's youth to assume responsible roles in society as adults. In compliance with legal mandates children are introduced to the public education system at the age of six, and for 12 years thereafter are imbued with rudiments of our national history, culture, and basic skills essential to living in a complex society.[2] For many students, however, the process of schooling is debilitating rather than preparatory.

For the purpose of this discussion school debilitation is defined as conditions resulting from behavior manifested by school personnel, that occurs within the school environment and negatively impacts students.

Such behavior could include action by school personnel that overlooks or condones poor student performance; the acceptance of mediocrity; overlooking students who require special attention; the use of degrading verbal and nonverbal language; and the employment of policies that are arbitrary and capricious. It should also be indicated that too often emphasis is placed on achieving bureaucratic goals and objectives that may have little or no particular concern for children.

School debilitation is further viewed as a process that allows students to move from grade to grade as long as they "don't rock the boat." Students who suffer this form of debilitation are rewarded by being allowed to complete high school as functional illiterates. However, as soon as the proverbial boat is rocked, such students may be counseled to withdraw from school because of poor academic performance.

The "non-boat-rocker" is lulled into a state of passivity by unconcerned school personnel to later discover that he or she is void of the requisite skills needed to function successfully in a complex society. These students are destined to experience a form of inequality that permeates minority urban communities generally and inner city and poor communities specifically. For example, inner-city residents are active participants of the last-hired, first-fired syndrome; their neighborhoods are poorly serviced by city maintenance units; and community markets often sell poor quality products at exorbitant prices.

Character debilitation, I choose to describe as a form of defrocking, a stripping away of all that is good, leaving only a shell of a person. Character debilitation depends upon an application of negative and

2. Andrew Robinson and Frank Bickel, "Discipline and the Public Schools: Are We as Educators Part of the Problem?" *Integrated Education*, March-April 1979, p. 9.

unfounded information, gross generalizations and biases as the basis for rejecting children. It is often prevalent in newly desegregated schools. In very subtle ways minority students in particular are made to feel alienated, lacking in experiences enjoyed by the dominant culture. Thus, their differences become inadequacies in every sense of the word.

Minority students in desegregated schools are often subjected to overt forms of racial discrimination and symbolic racism. They are usually suspended at three to four times the rate of their majority counterparts. All of these conditions operating singularly and/or collectively in urban schools tend to eliminate the desire for learning; to alienate urban students; and to foster feelings of inadequacy that are daily reinforced outside the school environment as well.

We do not know the degree to which aspects of school debilitation are practiced in urban schools. We do know that the immediate results of such acts tend to establish barriers between students and school personnel, tend to create an atmosphere of confrontation, and serve as a devisive mechanism leading to the establishment of hostile camps—"them" (students) and "us" (teachers). In the teacher's camp, we can find school personnel (usually in the teachers' lounge) casting disparaging remarks against many of their students, lamenting how things have changed. In like manner, students discussions might focus on what they feel is unfair and abusive treatment.

Under these circumstances, teaching becomes extremely difficult and learning is practically impossible. In a real sense, the existence of such conditions establishes the stage for conflict between students and school personnel. As educators, all of us at one time or another have experienced student-teacher conflicts. Such conflicts produce a no-win situation, a losing proposition for the teacher and for the student.

The teacher's authority as the classroom leader is threatened, and the student is subjected to ridicule or ego deflation in front of peers. Kelton (1967) describes the conflict as a "power struggle" which has an ultimate consequence the sacrifice of the student to the teacher's authority. Often the teacher resorts to the use of a final display of authority by summarily sending the student to a higher official. The frequently heard command, "Go to the principal's office," represents an end (at least temporarily) to the confrontation and serves as a defeat to the student.

The scenario is continued as the student enters the school's central office. Here the student may encounter caustic remarks from unfriendly office personnel while awaiting an audience with the principal. The principal, already feeling the pressures of the day, comes into contact with a recently humiliated student. Again the stage is set for conflict as the

school continues its process of debilitation. The student-principal encounter may proceed in the following manner:

> I told him that the teacher was always trying to "put me down" in front of the class. I told him that the teacher knew I didn't like math so why did he keep calling on me, just to "put me down" to make me look bad. I'm not as dumb as he thinks, so I "turn it around" on him and get the class to laugh at him. See how he likes being the fool. The principal said I was a wise guy, thought I was a "smart alec." He said that what I needed was a good old-fashioned talk behind the woodshed. I told him "Who're you going to get to do it, better not try or somebody is going to get hurt, bad." Man, he turned white and started to shake. "You're suspended for threatening a school official." That's good, I said, this school ain't worth a shit anyway.[3]

In the central cities, the debilitating process described above results in yet another urban youngster forced to leave school to join his cohorts already on the streets. It should be clearly understood that the debilitation process as described is not relegated to urban schools. We can find it at work in suburban and rural schools as well. To ascertain the severity of the problem in urban schools, however, one might look at the national youth unemployment problem.

It is reported that the current unemployment rate for black teenagers is approaching three times the rate for white teenagers. The problem is further compounded when attention is directed to the unemployment rate among inner-city youth. It is estimated that 40 percent of inner-city youth are unemployed, and the Urban League suggests that the "real" rate of inner-city youth unemployment is 60 percent.[4] Thus, while processes of debilitation occur in all schools, urban schools are especially prone to such occurrences.

The long-range effect of school debilitation processes on urban youth are devastatingly grave. One cannot easily ignore the familiar life cycle of unemployment, poverty, criminal behavior, drug usage, and the dependence on welfare and other forms of subsistence. It has been suggested that children of impoverished conditions are likely to forever re-

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3. H. G. Ellis and S. M. Newman, "'The Greaser Is a Bad Ass; The Gowster Is a Muthah,' An Analysis of Two Urban Youth Roles," in Thomas Kochman (ed.) *Rapping and Stylin' Out: Communication in Black America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972) pp. 375-376.

4. "The Youth Unemployment Problem: Facts and Figures—Conference on Employing Inner-City Youth." The Vice President's Task Force on Youth Employment, August 1979.

main in such a state due to the inequality of treatment they are certain to encounter as they move through American society.

> In the United States as elsewhere, it is a penalty to be born poor. It is a compounding penalty to be born to parents who are frequently unemployed and whose employment opportunities are limited to relatively uninteresting dead end jobs. All of these penalties are increased still more for children in racial minorities. . . .[5]

The die is cast for many urban youngsters prior to birth. The school becomes the single most important factor to mediate such overwhelming odds. However, contrary to the often articulated fundamental purpose of schooling it serves to debilitate many youngsters instead. Urban youth, like non-urban children, generally enter school excited about the prospect of learning and eager to participate in new adventure. Unfortunately, after a brief school experience, these youngsters join the ranks of their disillusioned older brothers and sisters who are no longer excited or interested in learning. Thus, the cycle of poverty promises to become complete.

Some Overt and Covert Practices of School Debilitation

> How does it come about that the one institution that is said to be the gateway to opportunity, the school, is the very one that is most effective in perpetuating an oppressed and impoverished status in society?[6]

The school serves as a sorting system for society. Obvious categorical distinctions are made as children come in formal contact with the school. These distinctions are systematically reinforced by school personnel for as long as many children interact with the school system.

Shortly after the school experience begins, children are categorized based on the teacher's observations, perceptions, and biases, which guide the grouping of children for instructional purposes. The various groups might wear such well-meaning labels as the Blue Jays, Robins, and Sparrows. The class soon determines, however, that the Robins are the children who are slow and/or different.

In a theoretical sense this group should receive the most time and attention from the teacher because of their slowness. However, in many

5. Richard H. deLone, *Small Futures: Children, Inequality, and the Limits of Liberal Reforms* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979).
6. Annie Stein, "Strategies for Failure," *Harvard Educational Review*, Reprint Series No. 5, 1971.

instances the reverse is true, in that children who need the most often receive the least. This can be attributed to several seemingly plausible reasons which are:

- The teacher probably received little or no formal training at the university related to teaching slow learners in the regular classroom;
- Working with slower children is perceived as more difficult, less challenging intellectually, and more time consuming;
- The teacher may well bring to the teaching situation his or her negative attitudes and biases toward teaching the slow learner.

The preference may well be to concentrate time and energy on developing the skills of the Sparrows and the Blue Jays, for they show greater promise for success and they are more likely to mirror, to a greater extent, the dominant culture. Thus, the Robins are deemed incapable and not worth the extra effort. In this manner, a simple decision based on individual preference and perhaps on some educational misconceptions leads to writing off large numbers of children . . . and the debilitation process begins.

Later in the school experience children are exposed to a battery of tests. In many instances the results of the tests serve to cement the teacher's initial perceptions and observations and reveal that some of the children lack many of the basic skills possessed by children of the dominant culture. Test results often serve as the final determiner that relegates some children to the Robins for life. As indicated, the Robins become the group that frequently receives the least amount of encouragement, attention, and instructional time; curricula may be watered down for them; and a low set of achievement standards are established and maintained.

What actually transpires is the application of the self-fulfilling prophecy which in essence encourages children to internalize the low level of expectation held by school personnel.

> The real danger in misperceiving the abilities and desires of a child is that it leads to an attitude which treats him as different, and when this happens, the child in fact tends to become 'different.' Children who are treated in school as if they were ineducable tend to see themselves in this way and almost invariably become ineducable. Similarly children who are placed in inferior groups suffer a sense of humiliation—a feeling that influences their attitudes toward the learning process.[7]

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7. Sol Gordon, "Primary Education in Urban Slums: A Mental Health Orientation" in *The Urban R's* Robert Dentler et al., (eds.) (New York: Frank A. Draeger Publishers, 1967).

As the Robins continue to interact with the school system, the system continues to establish debilitating procedures, reinforcing the negativism the Robins encountered early in their school experience. Many Robins are subjected to a tracking system which again is a form of grouping. The track system is designed to place the Robins in remedial or low level courses because they did not perform adequately in the earlier grades or on standardized tests.

Upper grade teachers, like their lower grade colleagues, vie for the more advanced classes. Normally the most qualified teachers, those with the most teaching experience and professional training along with those who have political clout, are assigned to regular and advanced classes. The basic or remedial classes are given to the least experienced teachers.

Again the debilitation process is at work against the Robins as the system fails to recognize that after years of neglect the Robins now require a special kind of instruction. The problem is further exacerbated in that inexperienced teachers with little or no contact with urban Robins rely strongly on information (about this group) obtained from secondary sources. Thus, the pre-existing attitudes that inexperienced teachers bring to school can have significant impact on the climate that is ultimately established within the school.

Such attitudes, if viewed negatively by Robins, may impede the accomplishment of specific learning tasks, activities, and goals. Green (1975) indicates that children from low socio-economic or urban communities are often confronted in the classroom by teachers who view them as intellectually deprived and unlikely to succeed.

Aspects of debilitation existing in the school and the community reinforce negative attitudes maintained by Robins. The rationale normally given to Robins for completing high school has been related to future employment and the prospect of a more productive life than their parents. However, the urban Robins know that what often applies to the dominant culture does not apply to them, and they have evidence close at hand that such is the case. For example, they are acquainted with individuals who succeeded in obtaining a high school diploma, but who are jobless, on welfare, or are engaged in menial work. Yet these individuals were supposedly trained in the high schools to perform in the world of work.

Historically, urban minorities were counseled into vocational and trade schools because it was felt that they could not compete in regular academic programs. Those who were allowed to enter regular programs were guided away from courses of study that would prepare them for college. In addition, the importance of the heavy sciences, required for the study of medicine and other careers that require a strong background in

the natural and physical sciences, was deemphasized. In many instances, this was done even though students held aspirations, and some the potential, for becoming doctors, engineers, physicists, chemists, and the like. The lack of support from school personnel was viewed by these individuals as another "put down" by the system.

Two serious errors occur as students are counseled to enroll in vocational courses. The first error is to mislead students into thinking that vocational programs are not academically demanding, and are therefore more suited to their skill level and academic ability. The fact is that many vocational-oriented programs are extremely demanding and require some knowledge of chemistry, physics, and advanced mathematics. Such programs certainly require the ability to read and interpret complex materials. The second error of this counseling process involves allowing students to believe that the completion of four years of vocational training will lead to satisfying and monetarily rewarding careers. Vocational graduates armed with a diploma attesting to the acquisition of certain skills find that industry is unwilling to accept them.

This was and continues to be true of the building trade industry that is primarily controlled by white labor unions. The building trade unions continue to reject the majority of these students even as apprentices, while accepting white high school dropouts, with no previous knowledge of the trade, into apprenticeship programs. But Robins often never complete high school and subsequently do not have to be concerned with that aspect of debilitation.

Many Robins and other alienated students employ a variety of defense strategies to counter the negative school experience. Some choose to completely avoid the source of their continuing frustration by withdrawing from school. Others attend on an irregular basis, occasionally dropping by to visit friends. Though these students officially remain on class rosters, they have for all practical purposes rejected school as school personnel rejected them earlier.

Others assume a defensive posture by actually questioning school rules and regulations. These students are suspended with some regularity for their audacity and lack of respect for school rules. Stein (1971) reports that ghetto schools have always ruthlessly suspended students for any behavior that annoyed the teacher. The annoyance could well be a manifestation of the teacher's inadequacies and/or insecurities rather than unacceptance behavior demonstrated by the student. In other instances students may well exhibit inappropriate school behavior in response to years of dominance by insensitive school personnel.

It is normal to avoid unpleasant experiences and encounters. Most adults tend to shun uncomfortable situations, unfriendly environments,

and other factors that do not operate in their best interest. For many students school is perceived as an uncaring and unresponsive environment that lacks warmth and does not operate in their best interest. Students clearly recognize that they lack the power to change the school, so the tendency is to avoid school through truancy, one method of coping with an unfavorable situation.

A student is regarded as truant if he or she remains out of school without parental permission. However, it is perfectly legitimate for the school to suspend a student for a period of time. An astute urban youngster who has a proclivity to be truant need only act up in the classroom to be legally put on the street.

> . . . The great majority of suspensions do not serve any demonstrated valid interests of children or schools. Instead, they harm the children involved and jeopardize their prospects for securing a decent education. Suspension pushes children and their problems into the streets, thereby causing more problems for them and for the rest of us. They become a crutch enabling school people to avoid the tougher issues of ineffective and inflexible school programs, poor communications with students, parents, and community, and a lack of understanding about a commitment to serving children from many different backgrounds and with many different needs in our public schools.[8]

Suspensions can be compared to truancy in that in each instance students are missing valuable classroom instruction; they aimlessly roam the streets and they are readmitted to school without systematic attempts to improve either the student's behavior or the school climate. Truancy is the student's method of avoiding unpleasant conditions, and the use of suspensions is the school's method of not attending to student problems.

The outward appearance of many urban schools reflects the hostility and alienation that Robins often feel. A high school on the near South Side of Chicago is a classic example of the negative attitudes many urban students exhibit toward their community school. The windows of that school become targets for vandals, and at one point all of the windows in the building were broken. Replacing glass panes became a time-consuming and costly task, as the windows were broken again within a week of replacement.

No attempt was made to ascertain causal factors related to the window breakage. A carefully orchestrated study may have identified reasons for the occurrence as well as measures to curb such activity.

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8. "School Suspensions: Are They Helping Children?" a report by the Children's Defense Fund of the Washington Research Project, Inc., 1975.

Study results may have revealed that window breakers were students who held the school in low esteem, or former students who were seeking revenge against an institution which was insensitive to them. Study results may have revealed needs that a community program, operated from the school, might meet. Such a program might have generated a sense of ownership and belonging which could help protect the building against further vandalism.

However, school officials responded to what may have been serious cries for help by replacing every window with sheets of plywood, thereby, blocking all natural light. The hostile and alienated students, were required to attend school in a building that was not architecturally designed to be void of natural light. In this instance all students experienced a form of debilitation. School officials responded to a window breakage problem with an easy and obvious solution rather than by seeking systematic causal factors and applying creative solutions to a serious set of problems.

We can ill afford to continue applying temporary solutions to student problems, overlooking negative school conditions that clearly require the application of thoughtfully orchestrated corrective measures. For example, we know that school suspensions, corporal punishment, and other such measures for the most part do not improve negative student behaviors. In like manner, negative behaviors manifested by school personnel cannot be discounted merely because of the difficulty school officials might encounter attempting to eradicate such behaviors.

The problem of educating urban youth is a serious problem that will not fade away. It is recognized as a multifaceted societal problem that has implications beyond the boundaries of the school. It is imperative that we, as educators, assume a leadership role in seeking out positive solutions and corrective measures to improve the quality of education for urban youth and thereby increase their chances of participating equally in society as adults.

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The Urban School: Forced To Fail

by Emeral A. Crosby

MORE THAN 100 years ago Charles Dickens wrote *A Tale of Two Cities.* It began: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it as the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us."

Today more people have more money than ever before, yet there is more poverty than ever before in certain rural communities and in the slum areas of our cities. Almost everywhere one can find comfortable affluence and more deprivation and poverty. There are more high school graduates than ever before; there are also more dropouts. There is more security; there is more uncertainty. There is more education; there is more miseducation. There is more success than ever before; yet there is more failure. It is the best of times, it is the worst of times.

There are several factors concerning the urban school that bear considerably on forcing it to fail, including the following:

1. The decision process (bureaucracy);
2. Personnel (students and staff);
3. Building and sites;
4. Migration or flight;
5. Overload;
6. Financing;

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7. Unionism;
8. Innovative and experimental programs;
9. Court decisions;
10. Professional preparation;
11. Federal aid; and
12. Millage failure.

Since time and space will not permit a thorough discussion of all the above factors, this article will consider the first five.

The Bureaucracy

What causes the urban school to fail? One factor is the decision process. What is the decision process? What does it consist of? Who runs it? How does it operate?

The term "decision process" is borrowed from Robert Liston and John K. Galbraith. They have said that America, whether in private corporations or in government offices, is run not so much by individuals as by a process, a method, a system. Success in our society is related not so much to individual ability as to the efficient operation of the decision process.

Decision in the modern business enterprise is the product not of individuals but of groups. The groups are numerous, as often informal as formal, and subject to constant change in composition. Each contains persons possessed of the information or with access to the information that bears on the particular decision, together with those whose skills consist of extracting and testing this information and obtaining a conclusion. This is how persons act successfully on matters where no single one, however exalted or intelligent, has more than a fraction of the necessary knowledge. It is what makes modern business possible and in another context it is what makes modern government possible.

The decision process is how things work in America. No single person nor committee of persons can govern any large corporation, government agency, military service, university, hospital, or school system. The leader must depend on the actions of others. The supposed leader's actions are dictated by others.

The coming of our forefathers to the colonies is an example of the decision process. When the controlling powers of seventeenth century Europe became too oppressive the local inhabitants began to flee to the suburbs—the new frontiers of America. Flight was their strategy for solving many of their problems—high taxation, poor housing, legal injustices, and unemployment.

After these newcomers arrived in the colonies and similar problems arose, as other groups moved into their neighborhoods and threatened the

status quo, the old inhabitants packed up and moved to the suburbs. The Indian was living in the suburbs, and since he would not give up his suburban home peacefully, other action had to be taken. Create a ghetto and move him to it. To do this with a clear conscience, it was necessary to declare the Indian as different—a savage, an animal, a barbarian, an inferior.

No one person could be given the responsibility to make the decision regarding the Indians, for if one person did it, that person could be called before another individual with a superior position in the hierarchy. The first person's course of action or information could be examined, and his decision reversed by the greater wisdom or experience of his superior. But if the decision was the result of the combined action of a group it could not be safely reversed by an individual. Only another group, equal in peer power to the first, could do so. Once the process began it continued to operate, and it still does. The decision process is the institution, and the urban school is deeply rooted in the decision process.

The decision process can be called the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is in operation when the request for a decision requires all information, general or minute, to be fed to specialists at the next higher level, who then amalgamate the information for another group of specialists at the next higher level for a decision.

The information is passed upward through management hierarchy, and at the same time dictates the decision or action at each succeeding level while losing communication with the institutors and often distorting the information. The uncanny aspect of the institutional decision process, or the bureaucracy, is that although it operates by persons with the help of computers it is not controlled by men. It is self-generating, self-regulating, self-perpetuating, an entity in itself.

It is extremely difficult to sidestep, silence, or control the bureaucracy. As the bureaucracy is the driveshaft for an institution or organization, it is also frequently the brakes for innovation and change. Institutions resist change; bureaucracies resist change. The growing complexities of the demands of our society tend to make the existing networks and organizational structure of the urban school obsolete. And unless the bureaucracy is aborted or sterilized, when it is blocking meaningful change it is inevitable that the urban school will fail a large number of its clients.

Building and Sites

The complete role that the environment plays in aiding or hindering learning is not generally understood, even in situations where the educational goals have been established. But it is an obvious fact that the statement attributed to Horace Mann about a teacher on one end of a log

and a student on the other is applicable today as the best learning environment. The problems which today's youth will have to solve tomorrow will require more complex and efficient facilities.

Everyone knows that education is experiencing much change—in curriculum, technology, and school organization. Many of the urban school buildings are located in the older sections of the cities, and they range in age from 50 to 100 years. Not only are they old, but many of the buildings are safety hazards and violate modern fire codes. In the urban community the trouble is that many older schools just cannot accommodate the activities, student groups, equipment, and materials that new programs and structure demand. In addition, the colors most prevalent in the urban school are the "ugly" colors—brown, black, institutional gray, or olive green. Research has shown that students do much better academically and creatively in rooms painted yellow, yellow-green, orange, or light blue.

One solution, of course, is to remodel. But to remodel means engaging in a well-planned comprehensive study of all buildings in the urban district according to priorities for each building within a framework of systematic, long-range upgrading of the curriculum. However, the bureaucracy prevents this, for the bureaucracy focuses all of its energies and efforts on new construction for the periphery and suburbs to accommodate the flight from the inner city.

The urban school—either through faulty educational theory, lack of funds, or citizen support of larger schools to foster integration—has become unwieldy, often housing 1,000 to 4,000 elementary to senior high school students in one building. The logistics of getting so many people in and out and around a building are tremendous.

Educational planners and decision makers often produce environments without first understanding their desired purpose: Who will inhabit the buildings and why. It is apparent that the creators of educational environments must first ask at least two basic questions. What should happen in the urban school? How can the urban school environment be planned so that the desired behaviors will be encouraged? Unless the questions are seriously considered, then buildings and sites will help force the urban school to fail.

Overload

The public school is a social system established to deliver good education to the students who attend it. Most people would agree that the major goal of the public school is to teach students to read, write, and compute. To understand why the urban school is forced to fail is to

recognize another one of its problems. The urban school is a victim of overload.

Overload happens when an institution becomes ineffective because its internal structure is too complicated to allow for adequate communication, or when its external framework is rendered inoperable by having too large a burden placed on it. The urban school is no longer just an academic institution; it is also a social and welfare institution. It provides recreation, cultural growth, and emotional development along with blood donations, health checkups, food service, united foundation contributions, voter registration, draft registration, driver education, sex education, and employment services.

All these responsibilities have been added to the school without an administrative or structural change or the necessary additional personnel. Problems arise by increasing the layer of responsibilities in an organization, which also increases the number of areas where vested interests can violate the basic organizational goals. In other words, a complex institution becomes more vulnerable to dysfunction merely because there are more places where things can go wrong.

The continued process of adding responsibility upon responsibility to the organizational structure causes the individual to view the institution and his or her experiences in it as artificial, unreal, remote, and irrelevant.

When finances are tight—a characteristic of large urban districts—the logical thing to cut is the layer of responsibilities outside the basic organizational goal. However, due to the power and influence of the special interest groups who represent these additional layers of responsibilities, other programs such as remedial reading, remedial math, guidance counseling, the school paper, the library, art and music, and extracurricular activities are the first programs dropped. Yet these are just the enrichment that the youth of urban areas need to make use of the schooling to which they are so unwillingly exposed.

Unless there is a restructuring of the educational organization to handle the additional demands of society and service the basic organizational goals, then the urban school is forced to fail a large number of its present clients.

A New Population

"What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child," John Dewey suggested in 1899, "that must the community want for all of its children. Any other idea for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy."

Our democracy has not been destroyed, but it is in danger of destruc-

tion, for the community is not providing the best education for its minority youngsters. It is offering a better education than ever before, but that is not enough. Too many of the urban schools are failing to provide the minority student with the intellectual skills and academic knowledge that these students need if they are to earn a decent living and participate in the social and political life of the community.

The urban school was not designed for its present clientele. The school population has changed considerably in the post-World War II period. Prior to that period the urban school population consisted predominantly of children of the wealthy and the middle class. Now the children of the minorities and the poor make up the majority of the urban school enrollment.

In the early 1950s, most of the wealthy and a large percentage of the white middle class began to move from the major cities. This was precipitated in part by the development of the interstate highway system, which made commuting convenient, and on the various federal mortgage insurance programs that financed suburban housing construction. The advertising industry, a component of the process, contributed greatly to the migration.

Employment patterns also affected the cities and the urban schools. The amount of farm work now available is about a fourth of what it was a decade ago. Rapid mechanization of farms is expected to continue, driving more displaced farm workers to the cities in search of work, and their children to the urban schools.

Although the population of the major cities is decreasing and the school population is decreasing, the minority population in the urban school is increasing. As the minority school population increases, the problems related to servicing large numbers, such as feeding, sanitation, records, supplies, the demands for safety and surveillance, fire rules and drills, protection against intrusion, robbery, assault, and vandalism, become overwhelming. The rules become more mechanical, rigid, and impersonal. The human element of understanding and adaptability is lost in the bureaucracy of the establishment. Students are disguised as numbers and file cards and even teachers lose personalities.

One of the major problems of the urban school is delinquent behavior. America's urban schools, especially the high schools, are drifting toward a kind of anarchy or civil war, and faster than most people realize. Too many schools are angry places in which every rule is questioned and conflict is the norm; where students commit acts of defiance that are astonishing in their destructive effect; and where authorities are beginning to react with strict punishment and armed hallway guards.

Three deficiencies of schools probably contribute to delinquent behavior in youth:

1. The education enterprise is not meaningfully related to the real world outside—the world of employment, changing social conditions, and other issues.
2. The school does not present itself as a model of the pluralistic society. Groups are kept apart by ability, race, by economic class. The school isolates. It excludes.
3. The school often does not prepare youth for mature life. Students learn largely through imitation. Therefore, they have to be presented with a model of future expectations. The school must allow the exercise of self-responsibility and opportunity for decision making to prepare youth for adulthood.

School experience, irrelevant to life experience and to employment opportunities, contributes heavily to dropout rates. A school organization which isolates and excludes according to ability, race, or economic class denies youth the opportunity for meaningful interaction with diverse segments of society. This causes delinquency.

Using data from an 18-month study of 757 school districts, the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency reported that vandalism alone in American public schools is now costing taxpayers $500 million a year, which is more than is being spent on textbooks. Unless a new educational theory is developed and implemented to service its new clients, the urban school will be forced to fail.

The Professional Staff

Included in the myriad of problems and adding to the complications of the urban school is the anomaly of professional personnel for the new population. First there is a shortage of professional staff—not by supply but by design. In suburban communities surrounding large urban districts the average number of professional personnel to 1,000 pupils is 60. The national average is about 40, and the urban district has fewer than that. Where the need is greatest the supply is least.

The turnover rate of teachers in the urban schools is much higher than in suburban schools or in more stable communities. The result is that the urban school, especially the inner-city school, is often staffed by either newly hired or noncontract teachers. Some urban districts add to the problems by guaranteeing new teachers in the inner-city schools the right to transfer after three years. Allied to this general problem is the need in many instances to retrain teachers used to pupils from middle-class families who suddenly find themselves engulfed with minority students whose values and experiences are different from their own.

Concomitantly, teacher training institutions have not placed emphasis on preparing teachers for work in schools servicing minority students. A majority of the teacher candidates have not had courses familiarizing them with the psychology, history, culture, and learning problems of minority pupils. Generally the school district does not furnish inservice training to make the teachers or administrative staff more effective in working with minority students. The current practice of personnel assignment and inservice training must be changed or the urban school is forced to fail.

Revolutions require revolutionary methods and processes. The urban school problems and the cultural revolution are being handled in an ad hoc and inefficient manner. Confusion about goals is matched by lack of commitment to genuine alleviation of educational ills.

A number of generalizations can be made about minority education in the United States, education housed primarily in the urban school. First, substantial minority deprivation, segregation, and exploitation does exist. Second, these forms of discrimination are systematic and endemic to the form of internal colonialism that has been developed in this country. Third, they are continued because important segments of society profit from such arrangements. Therefore, while significant social and educational legislation has been enacted, there is only token enforcement. Fourth, political influence follows economic power, and those with vested interests use their power to resist progressive educational reform.

When change is allowed, either for appearance's sake or as a result of popular pressure, educational programs are set up in a manner which ensures failure (special funding for one year, or an appendage to the regular program), or they are perverted to serve the interest of groups other than the poor. Reforms are nearly impossible to bring about, because national priorities are structured to preclude meaningful change.

Finally, institutions tend to resist change. Institutions are power, and power concedes to nothing but power. If the urban school with its minority students is to have equal access to the American Dream, a powerful force must move into the educational arena to represent its cause; otherwise the urban school will fail.

> It is the season of light, it is the season of darkness, it is the spring of hope, it is the winter of despair, we have everything before us, we have nothing before us, we are going to succeed, or we will surely fail.

Those of us whose daily tasks make us responsible for preventing the total failure of urban schools are committed to returning urban education to the mainstream. We think you will agree that the survival of urban schools is directly dependent upon the sincere and complete involvement

of urban communities. Therefore, we urban educators ask not for blind support but for the necessary financial, political, and spiritual assistance that will aid us in providing first class learning experiences for all students, thus giving them a major thrust toward equal access in this challenging adult world.

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The Constraints of Convention

by Robert W. Evans and James E. Hagerty

CRITICS OF URBAN schools are accusing administrators of poor management and excessive operational costs. Teachers are being blamed for failing to teach their students the essential basics. And all school personnel—from board members to custodians—are accused of letting disruptive students take over.

Citizens—fed up with high taxes and inflation—are demanding changes in schooling and its management. The vexing issues in the social-political-economic spheres today have intensified these demands. But the institutional response to these criticisms has been sporadic, disjointed, and in some instances punitive.

There is a basic operational mechanism in urban schools that triggers such a nonproductive response. That mechanism is designed to "protect" the organization from capricious and insidious manipulations from outside forces. As this mechanism serves to protect the organization from harm it also tends to marshall its forces against potential supporters, thereby directing its energies from the changes that are needed for it to remain vigorous and vibrant.

The mechanism in question is delineated by a conventional wisdom that, when applied to urban problems and their solutions, tends to block necessary changes. Those marginal changes that are effected by members of the organization are controlled and fashioned by a pragmatic method of operation—one that is nurtured by a conventional wisdom that interprets school administration as the maintenance of disparity.

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There appear to be four basic tenets to this wisdom. Each has its roots in American pragmatism and is nourished by the "realities" of administrative survival:

- *Accountability*—As principals are accountable for the smooth operation of their schools, they must control all the basic elements available to them to assure efficiency. These basic elements include teachers and other school employees, students, parents, and community resources. (Innovation and creativity are not conducive to such control and fall prey to the accountability syndrome.)
- *Funding*—"Soft" money programs have little impact on the teaching-learning process and improved funding does not necessarily equate with improved learning. (Fear of control by outside agents precludes the true integration of curricular change, reform, and innovation.)
- *Utility*—Administrative theory offers little to beleaguered administrators in their day-to-day functions of keeping school open and operating. (It is impossible to drain the swamp when you are up to your waist in alligators.)
- *Authority*—A well-organized hierarchical system of management and labor relationships protects the concepts of *in loco parentis* and line-staff associations. Line authority relationships are construed to protect turf.

Corollary beliefs include the following:

—Where you have been determines where you will be going.
—Teacher competency can be measured only by subjective means.
—Administration utilizes power best as a moving force.
—Curriculum is a function of the system.

The degree to which the above is adopted by urban school personnel—and it is to a large degree—determines the degree of adaptability present within the organization.

Renewal, as Richard A. Schmuck (1979) clearly narrates, depends upon ". . . skills, monies and structures for responding creatively and collaboratively to the many daily challenges (schools) face."

It is our contention that the key to developing a renewal process for urban schools under pressure is a modification of the operational formats of building leaders so that opportunities are realized for exploring and cultivating internal potential for organizational renewal.

Such leadership is mandated if educational change is to occur. Urban secondary schools are classified from data collected by Robert J. Havighurst for the NASSP, according to "backward," "faddist," "selective," and "pacesetters." Results indicated that 40 percent of 670 schools in U.S. cities with populations over 300,000 were backward in that they

had few educational innovations, of which half or less were of low quality (Nelson and Sieber, 1976).

The impact of innovation is only one measure of a school's renewal capability. Barbara Sizemore, former superintendent of schools in Washington, D.C. could not identify any urban school districts that were operating successfully (Watson, 1978).

Rand Corporation findings in five urban districts point up seldom recognized elements of the educational change process (Pincus and Williams, 1979):

- Broad-based prior support is not a prerequisite for effective educational change.
- The process of planned educational change does not require charismatic leadership.
- As critical factors—demographic, political, financial, and bureaucratic—change, previously stable structures of innovation often collapse.
- The timing and strength of innovative efforts have unique characteristics that make them different on a district-by-district basis in terms of successful educational change.
- Innovative movements in each district increase and decrease in accord with such various factors as the change process itself, desegregation, and financial issues.

The present response mechanism must be replaced with an internal remedy model that is based upon acceptance, is success oriented, rewards individual and group initiatives, stimulates creativity, and requires participation in forming the regulatory features of the body politic.

Role of Principal in Collegial Decision Making

The principal as the educational leader must coordinate resources that bear on improving the quality of educational experiences for students. Essential to this role is the assumption that staff, students, and community persons work cooperatively in defining and structuring new curricular approaches.

The traditional and time-honored approaches carry a variety of labels—principal's advisory council, human relations committee, administrative policy board—but do not serve the critical needs of the urban school. The mechanisms which have been developed to control the decision-making process are, in fact, weakening the potential of school personnel to respond effectively to new demands.

This protective machinery has become one of the pieces of the organization that has caused general mistrust and frustration within the community. Within the organization, teachers and their bargaining

agents see these devices as administrative tools designed to centralize power and/or control at the upper echelons.

Although the appeal for greater staff and parent involvement in the decision-making process is not new, so far as urban school governance is concerned, it generally is not realized. Special exceptions exist in those districts undergoing racial desegregation, where community involvement has been a significant component, built in to assess student needs and to monitor the provision of equal educational opportunity.

For example, the potential for increased teacher involvement with principals in making important building decisions is emerging in the San Jose Teacher Improvement Project (Crockenberg and Clark, 1979). Although its focus is need and problem-centered, the primary assumption of the project is to increase the effectiveness of the teaching staff as well as the school itself.

Further, urban school administrators must become directly responsible for the level of parental support for education. Parents of minority and disadvantaged students do care about quality education. New approaches and devices are needed for schools to build cooperative relations between parents and staff.

Role of Teachers in Urban School Renewal

Urban educators must begin to break the vicious cycle of recurrent frustration that depletes the school's capacity to respond to external and internal problems. That cycle has been described as an interactive set of perceptions and feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and depersonalization that leads to a sense of powerlessness and feeling of incompetence in teachers and administrators (Bell, 1979).

The role of teachers becomes significant when the school leaders decide to deal with this problem. The teaching staff should be perceived by principals as a corps of internal agents with potential for implementing change. They can be classified roughly into three categories (Ottoway, 1979):

- Change generators who serve to convert pervasive social issues into felt needs of the organization.
- Change implementors who actualize the changes after the organization has recognized the needs for them.
- Change adopters who carry out the innovations and help make them part of the behavioral norm of the organization.

The role of teachers in the urban school renewal process is a vital one, and is separate from their role as members of a bargaining organization. The principal can best coordinate teacher energy and insight for

change through a council devised to assess, assay, and assist the school in meeting the needs of the students.

Principals and teachers, working cooperatively, should create the atmosphere that permits each member of the staff to opt into the best suited individual change agentry role. Through a revitalized professional association, shared decision making and total staff accountability can serve to catalyze the group and individual behavioral processes needed to change the reflexive mode that too often characterizes urban education.

Third and Fourth Dimensional Decision-Making Elements

The basic sociopolitical character and internal power valence of the urban school require an expansion of the traditional base of control of the institution to include its clients: students and parents.

These two groups have much to offer in the formation of a strong constituency and a solid support base for identifying needs and problems, supplying the resources to deal with them and generating the needed energy and weight to sustain the changes through critical periods.

Student insights are most helpful in identifying institutional needs. Student involvement does not make them power brokers within the institution (Minkoff, 1978).

Parents as well need to be involved in school decisions. With real opportunities to participate in important decisions, they can provide intelligence, enthusiasm, and moral support to staff and students as the school moves to deal with issues that concern all parties.

Traditional school group affiliates—such as student council and PTO members—are seldom the most effective persons to use as representatives of nebulous and unorganized constituencies. The principal will need to use creative methods to determine the most appropriate and effective representatives from these groups.

Conclusion

The true leadership of the urban principal is best manifested in raising student, parent, and staff expectations; making full use of available instructional and non-instructional resources; building stronger interpersonal relations with and without the system; involving all constituent elements of the school organization; and developing a level of interaction among the school's staff and clientele that fosters confidence and hope.

A viable mechanism for making this possible is a decision-making team composed of representatives of the total school community that can be trained and empowered to look at school problems, prioritize them,

and devise methods for resolving them. The principal, as coordinator and generator of such a team, provides a unique leadership dimension sorely needed today in urban schools.

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The Politics of Urban Education for the '80s

by Barbara J. Love, Byrd L. Jones, and Atron A. Gentry

THERE WAS NO LACK of agendas for reforming urban education during the 1970s. The forward momentum from the Economic Opportunity Act (1964), Title I (1965), Teacher Corps (1965), and the programs supported by the Education Professions Development Act (1967) continued into the next decade.

Adherents had time, energy, and resources to invest in various reforms—new staffing patterns, improved curricular materials, and plans to lessen racial imbalances. Previously underserved groups such as the poor, minorities, females, non-English-speaking, and the handicapped demanded equity. Despite many impressive federal programs and local improvements, however, urban schools have not overcome the major economic and social forces impinging on poor and minority students in America's inner-city neighborhoods. What dreams can keep hope alive in the 1980s?

A Legacy from the 1970s

The dominant political legacy of the urban development programs adopted in the decade after 1965 was a sense that "realistic" legislation would make much difference for poor and minority children. Some liberal school reformers of the 1960s shifted to a negative posture about the impact of schooling while boldly proclaiming a need for radical, but improbable, changes. Some said burn down the cities and start over.

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Others urged that cities be purged by bankruptcy, thereby canceling obligations and expectations that exceed their fiscal capacity.

Social scientists soberly examined the data and predicted a permanent underclass status for urban youth. American society in general "no longer depends on young people for anything in particular (unless it be as soldiers) and has been forced to create for them a succession of contrived roles and institutions not tightly woven into the community structure."[1]

Most observers believe that major trends will keep city schools a caldron of problems and political controversy at least until 1990. Teachers and administrators stress discipline because they see students as absent, late, inattentive, apathetic and ignored; using and abusing drugs as part of a hedonistic youth culture; and prone to vandalism and violence.

Teachers perceive themselves as frustrated, unsupported, overburdened, and failing; dependent on unions for salary increments and job security in light of projected reductions in staff; and under public attack for not achieving both equitable outcomes and minimum competencies for adult roles. City school systems are asked to demonstrate academic parity with suburban schools while overcoming forces of racial and class isolation, declining job opportunities in central cities, changing skill requirements for new careers, and higher costs in most cities for all human services.

Yet some positive legacies from the 1970s enhance the capacity for urban schools to plan for the 1980s. Teachers have higher salaries and more extensive training; and students are generally competent and motivated. Modular scheduling, team teaching, alternative programs, instructional aides, and individually-paced materials have freed teachers from many instructional locksteps. Some students' rights have been strengthened: Physically and mentally handicapped students have been legally placed in the least restrictive educational settings; test scores have been de-emphasized; and sex discrimination has declined in sports and special programs.

Cultural and racial pluralism have increased in textbooks and on instructional staffs. Although many urban schools are more racially isolated than they were 10 years ago, public agitation over busing and white flight have exaggerated their impact on most schools. Black students are advancing to post-secondary education in record numbers.

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1. Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee, *Youth: Transition to Adulthood* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973,) pp. 28-29.

Evidence from the 1970s indicates that inservice programs to improve the educational climate for low-income neighborhoods are possible. Scattered throughout American cities are schools that work because principals care, alternative programs that meet the needs of youth, teachers who motivate learning, and students who have a sense of purpose. A summary of educational innovations indicated that commitment of teachers and parents, given modest support, is sufficient to maintain a pattern of purposeful changes in schools that will continually reach to meet the evolving needs of a diverse student population.[2]

The economic impacts of a large high school cannot be ignored—some three to 10 million dollars in public funds and a roughly equivalent amount in foregone earnings by students. As a result of the many special programs initiated from Washington or by local systems in the past, schools today have developed different strengths to respond to particular neighborhood issues as well as common concerns facing urban schools in the 1980s.

School Politics in the 1980s

In the next decade the important political responsibility for urban school leadership will be to establish a shared sense of mission. Asked about the politics of urban secondary schools in the 1980s, one wise principal responded that "we need to start talking to the rest of society about what we can and cannot do."

Recognizing that school personnel are ill-prepared for all the responsibilities of adolescent development which affect cognitive and affective growth, the principal urged a process of discussion and collaboration with other human service agencies. The interrelationships among schools and other elements of the urban environment—family, mass media, jobs, neighborhoods and associations, offices for economic security and public safety—define the possibilities and limitations of public education.

Too often secondary school leaders have addressed issues which lie beyond their control rather than those which they can usefully affect. They see the problems but not the opportunities for managing change in

2. See Paul Berman and Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin, *Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Vol. IV: The Findings in Review* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The Rand Corporation [R-1589/4-HEW], April, 1975); and Paul Berman and Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin, *Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Vol. III: Factors Affecting Implementation and Continuation* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The Rand Corporation [R-1589/7-HEW], April 1977).

projected enrollment declines, teacher layoffs, financial cuts, curriculum mandates, management systems techniques, parent/community control, unions, and directions from central offices and state and federal program officers.

Yet, those conditions define key parameters within which administrators can focus on instituting change. Although computer-based management information systems are often seen as part of the problem, their use is an indispensible management tool to reduce administrivia and to allow principals time to facilitate consensus building and purposeful change.

There are given fiscal restraints. Large percentages of resources are locked into older buildings and extensively educated, tenured staff in most urban districts. In order to provide high quality, fair, relevant education for urban students, administrators will be required to reallocate available resources and use appropriate subsystems and evaluate feedback. Faced with the continuing specter of reduced financial support in real terms, administrators will need increased sophistication in the utilization of technology in both the management of schools and the delivery of instruction.

Enrollment declines will result in requirements for reduction in staff and in the number of schools, and unions will demand increased wages and more favorable retirement packages to cope with inflation, making labor-management negotiations a particularly thorny issue. Simultaneously, school administrators with full responsibility for educational and safety operations in a building will find their lack of hiring and firing power over subordinates increasingly intolerable.

A key question will be how to organize curriculum development and inservice training activities so that the movement toward minimum competency standards will be viewed as a starting point rather than as the goal of student development. At the same time, schools that fail to maintain a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning may find sharp enrollment drops as students find openings in other buildings.

Collaboration for Community Development

The economic and social case for cooperation among businesses, property owners, apartment managers, schools, welfare, police and fire departments, and a host of special agencies to meet the holistic needs of youth is clear. Good schools serve as a focal point for neighborhood activities, attract employers, stimulate home building and improvements, bring amenities of life associated with personal security, and foster positive attitudes toward future developments.

On the other hand, the poor quality of teaching and learning in

many urban high schools has contributed to high costs for other public services—for justice and jails, for welfare and medical assistance, for high unemployment and low-skilled jobs, for social disamenities connected with unsafe, blighted neighborhoods where despair flourishes and hope withers away.

Although schools should not respond to all of the social, psychological, cognitive, and affective developmental needs of adolescents, they risk adopting a too restricted view of the mission of schools. Nonprofit organizations as well as other nonpublic educational agencies and institutions have developed and delivered important nonformal educational programs.

When public institutions fight each other for resources, the losers are those youngsters most in need of a helping relationship. Non-formal educational services offered by community agencies provide a less bureaucratic and grade-oriented environment and better meet the needs of certain students at a lower cost to taxpayers. For instance, in areas such as drug and alcohol abuse appropriate expertise is more likely to be found outside than inside the public schools.

A good starting point for most schools would be to encourage community volunteer activities by supporting functional collaborations and offering academic credits. A recent Gallup poll showed overwhelming public approval (87 percent) of school credit for juniors and seniors who worked in community service. Yet fewer than one school in seven had such a program in 1977. Community service could tap the enormous physical and mental energies of youth, connect schools to neighborhood development/projects, provide work experience, and give youth a sense of usefulness to society.

Another exciting idea would be for schools to support advocacy roles for urban youth. This would encourage peer teaching activities. Some of those roles include:

a) Developing and disseminating information about employment opportunities for inner-city youth;

b) Developing and disseminating information about further educational opportunities and providing assistance in securing and completing appropriate forms and applications to take advantage of these opportunities;

c) Developing and implementing a students' rights policies and procedures manual for urban high schools;

d) Developing and disseminating information about the rights of urban youth to available public services; and

e) Developing and disseminating information about available

emergency services in the community such as hot lines, detoxification centers, rape centers, and shelters for abused persons.

Advocacy roles for youth might foster a sense of student involvement in the educational process and with institutions which impact their lives in significant ways, thus eliminating some of the distance and sense of irrelevancy which many youth feel toward schools and other human service agencies. A greater sense of fate control, that an individual's efforts can make a difference in his or her own life and those of peers, can result from such involvement with important spillover into academic performance.

Urban Schools and the World of Work

The most obvious failure of urban high schools lies in the type of socialization provided, which involves the world of work as well as experience with being responsible to and for others. This is tied to the failure to provide significant numbers of youth with employment skills which could facilitate their transition to adulthood. The situation for minority youth who face unemployment rates some four to five times the national average makes the promise of schooling a cruel hoax. No one is asked to consider how schools might work with businesses and with institutions of higher education to show how urban youth can acquire relevant skills for work or further education and move forward in a natural way to a productive and healthy life after high school.

Career education can benefit from collaboration around issues related to curriculum. For instance, the English High School in Boston worked together with nearby hospitals to create an alternative program for students interested in health careers. In turn, the program created a basis and a need for ongoing communication, support for some interested staff, and a better use of community resources. It does not serve all students but it does succeed with some who did not benefit from a traditional program.

There are feasible economic opportunities for job development in the central cities which need not be limited to low pay, non- and semi-skilled work opportunities. When limited by a myth that cities cannot or do not support work for skilled personnel, schools see no purpose in career-oriented academics.

Community development corporations such as the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in New York City provided a focus for community renewal, making neighborhoods safe and attractive to people and industry. When schools relate to decent employment opportunities in city neighborhoods they provide a basis for economic development and

stability which can lead to political influence. In turn voting power can provide support for schools.[3]

What Schools Can and Cannot Do

Urban politics for the 1980s, then, reduces to the nub issue: What substantive points about the capacities and incapacities of secondary schools should be communicated? To whom? By whom?

The process of clarifying what urban secondary schools can and cannot do is a critical political task in America precisely because it speaks directly to the future of society. Clearly, secondary school administrators should take the lead in defining the optimum effectiveness for their own building, staff strengths, community support, student needs, and institutional structures. Outsiders may help assess but should not impose their judgment that what worked in another place will succeed in a different setting.

As a crucial part of an open system of training for work, socialization, and personal growth, secondary school leaders must define their strengths in ways that share information, persuade, and build collaboration. They must communicate with students, parents, and the local communities that they serve, the blocs to whom they are responsible (and which provide funds), other human service agencies, and potential employers or institutions of higher education.

Perhaps if school leaders actively seek to define the role of schools within the larger society they can help overcome the alienation of youth cultures which have resulted from their size and age segregation. They should not undersell what they have achieved. Once strengths have been identified and steps toward collaboration established in those areas, administrators should take care to avoid overcommitment.

President Carter's recent attempt to require that urban impact statements accompany the development of any new programs may well facilitate collaboration between appropriate labor, urban redevelopment, employment, and youth advocacy agencies. One consequence will be a closer fit between what happens to young people in school and how they view the world of work.

Ultimately, the key factor in the politics of urban schools depends on what happens to their students. The goal for youth is to gain identity and autonomy or to gain a sense of control over their lives. Schools

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3. Harrison, Bennett, *Urban Economic Development: Suburbanization, Minority Opportunity, and the Condition of the Central City*, (Washington, D.C.: Washington Urban Institute, 1974).

should offer choices, knowledge about future choices of career and lifestyle, and experience with planning. Students should gain experience with setting goals, gathering information and resources, stumbling against human limitations, and setting goals based on relative success or failure.

The political stance of school leadership—to define what can and cannot be done—should set a model for students who need to see how their personal goals fit with those of their peers and with the real resources of the world. With local leadership, cities that face a no-growth future can create a balance of training and jobs, multicultural appreciation and civic sharing, and a safe and culturally rich environment.

At least some urban school principals will define a key role in the transformation of cities, and can expect to gain respect, financial support, and a sense of purposeful civic endeavor. That is a politics of hope for the 1980s.

Understanding the Politics of Urban Education

by Frank B. Pesci, Sr.

PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS many friends in the nation's capital, in the various state capitals, in the legislatures, and in the executive departments. However, the fact of the matter is that urban educators are not yet organized to do political battle effectively in Washington, or in the state capitals across this nation.

Principals and other administrators still lack the political skills and understanding needed to do business with elected officials. Responses to questions still tend to come too late and often the answers are without substance. If urban administrators are to participate successfully in the political arena, there are certain things they must learn and do.

First, administrators must learn the appropriations process, one of the most visible ways in which public schools are being held accountable by state legislatures today.

Universal access to education and increased community involvement mean that more people than ever before have a direct interest in public education. This has brought about a public demand (through elected officials) for greater involvement in setting educational priorities.

At the same time the political process of appropriating funds by state legislatures, plus increased constituent demands, have tended to encourage the development of cost formulas as a means of enhancing accountability.

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During the 1970s, education had to compete for funds with other programs being considered and evaluated by state legislatures—such programs as services to the handicapped, community mental health, transportation, drug abuse and alcoholism control, juvenile services, community corrections, and the environment.

Since 1971 for example, the Maryland House of Delegates has had a standing committee on appropriations with major responsibility to analyze and evaluate the state budget. But the Maryland General Assembly is just one of many state legislatures that have reformed since ***Baker v. Carr***. A majority of states have developed professional fiscal research staffs, streamlined archaic committee structures, extended sessions to reasonable lengths, and eliminated undemocratic rules and procedures.

There is every indication that state legislatures will continue to exert considerable pressure for accountability on public education through the appropriations process. One reason is obvious: State budgets have soared during the past quarter of a century, and urban LEAs are becoming incredibly complex and difficult to manage.

Government is responsible for protecting and maintaining the integrity of decision-making processes in all public agencies, including public education. This includes the right and obligation to ask whether institutions maintained and supported by the people conduct their affairs in such a way as to justify confidence and trust.

The Administrator as Politician

Administrators must learn to understand the functions and responsibilities of politicians, and they must develop the ability to communicate effectively with political decision makers.

No one is suggesting that hosts of public school administrators should be running for public office. But it is essential for administrators to learn the legislative process so that they can become a productive and recognized segment of the political system. This is particularly true on the state level, and especially true for administrators in urban settings.

The Politics of Urban Education

State policymaking for public education has always been inextricably tied to politics. To believe otherwise would be incredibly naïve. More often than not, educational proposals have stood as much on their political viability as they have on their substantive merits. Many diverse views and interests have been, and will continue to be, accommodated in policy decisions for public education at the state level. The need for the

urban education community to participate actively in the political process cannot be stressed enough.

The only alternatives for urban administrators are to be a part of the decision-making process, or to have those decisions affecting urban education imposed upon them by political leaders and executive department bureaucrats. Public policy for urban education will be shaped across America with or without the benefit of the expertise from the urban education community.

One Final Word

Given that elected public officials will continue to be involved in educational policymaking, those government leaders have a responsibility to be well-informed. In the past, some of the most effective educational policy development has come not as the result of political pressure, but as a result of dialog between political leaders and educational leaders. If meaningful dialog is to continue, elected officials must be perceived—regardless of their disagreements with educational leaders—as sincerely concerned with the quality of education and the public interest.

Desegregation of Urban Schools . . . Is It Possible?

by Richard D. Hanusey

IN PHILADELPHIA, the cradle of American liberty, it is appropriate that the city school district is implementing a voluntary desegregation plan for the schools. The plan is based on freedom of choice, and offers parents a variety of educational options for their children.

The district adopted the slogan, "Voluntary Desegregation . . . Together We Can Make It Work" to emphasize that desegregating the schools is not the responsibility of the school district alone. It is the responsibility of every segment of the community—students, parents, administrators, teachers, school board members, clergy, business and civic leaders, and city, state, and federal agencies.

The commitment to the rights of minorities and to the concept of brotherhood is a viable part of the history and tradition of Philadelphia. School officials are certain that not only is desegregation of urban schools possible, it is imperative if they are to prepare pupils to live in a multicultural, multiracial society.

Although the population of Philadelphia is approximaetly 60 percent caucasian and 40 percent minority, the pupil population of the public schools is just the opposite. This is due to a large and well-supported Catholic school system and a variety of other church-related and private schools.

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With a student population which is 68 percent minority (predominantly black, Hispanic, and Asian), the school district has two tasks:

1. To offer pupils the opportunity for educational experiences in multicultural, multiracial school environments; and
2. To prevent white flight from the public schools because of desegregation.

The voluntary desegregation plan addresses these two tasks.

The voluntary desegregation plan has the approval of both the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and the Commonwealth Court. Although the plan is only in its first full year of implementation, there have been outstanding successes. These include magnet schools, the Alternative for Middle Years (AMY) program, academic plus schools, and voluntary school pairings.

With an ESAA grant from the federal government, the district opened its first magnet school, the High School for Creative and Performing Arts, in February 1976.[1] The school uses an interdisciplinary approach to the arts and offers pupils at the secondary level a unique, individualized educational experience not presently available in existing schools. Located in the heart of the cultural center of the city, the school is surrounded by art and music colleges, museums, the Academy of Music, theaters, and libraries, making possible independent study and advanced study in other institutions.

The school easily met federal guidelines relating to racial composition, and it now has a population of 53 percent caucasian, 42 percent black, and five percent Hispanic and other minorities. The High School for Creative and Performing Arts has attracted students from all over the city and from nonpublic schools. It is convenient to public transportation and is located in a safe area—two crucial considerations in selecting sites for a magnet school.

As a result of the success of the High School for Creative and Performing Arts, two additional magnet schools were opened in September 1979—The High School for Engineering and Science, and the Middle Magnet School for Science and Math. These, too, are funded by a grant under ESAA.

The High School for Engineering and Science is located in a building on the campus of Temple University. The school offers advanced pupils the opportunity to complete high school requirements by the end of

1. John R. Vannoni, "The Role of the Magnet School in Integration," in *New Perspectives on School Integration*, edited by Murray Friedman, Roger Meltzer, and Charles Miller. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

the eleventh grade. During their final year, students have the options that include taking courses for advanced credit at five cooperating universities, or having an internship experience in a cooperating business or industrial firm, among others. The High School for Engineering and Science has been able to attract white and minority pupils, both male and female. Of the pupils enrolled in the first year, 38 percent are female. The school, which opened with 300 pupils in grade nine, will add a grade each year until it is a full four-year high school.

The Middle Magnet School for Science and Math has 250 pupils in grades six and seven. Next year an eighth grade will be added, and advanced math students will have the option of taking ninth grade algebra in a high school located on the same site as the magnet school. It is planned so that pupils from the Middle Magnet School for Science and Math may apply to the High School for Engineering and Science, thereby providing pupils with an articulated program.

The school district is presently planning two additional magnet schools for the 1980-81 school year—a High School for Fashion Design and Merchandising and a High School for Finance.

Admittedly, magnet schools cannot desegregate an entire school district. However, magnet schools in conjunction with other educational strategies can and are able to contribute to the elimination of racial isolation for many pupils and to improve the quality of life in our cities and metropolitan areas.[2]

School and community leaders in Philadelphia are concerned that magnet schools detract from the quality of instruction in inner-city schools by draining the best pupils and teachers, leaving them even more devoid of positive academic leadership than they were in the first place. In *The Future of Big City Schools*, Levine and Havigurst (1977) stress the importance of bolstering the academic skills of inner-city pupils and the need for systematic efforts to deliver instructional services more effectively.

To this end, Philadelphia administrators have developed "A Blueprint for Academic Achievement," a comprehensive plan to raise the academic achievement of all pupils. The blueprint is a long-range effort and includes the following elements: the community, leadership, curriculum, instruction, parent partnership, organization, and evaluation. The blueprint was presented recently to all administrators and to the

2. Daniel V. Levine and Robert J. Havigurst, eds., *The Future of Big City Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

board of education. The blueprint recommends specific objectives in each category and actions to meet those objectives.

A network of Alternative for Middle Years (AMY) schools is underway to meet the need for alternatives for children in the middle years. Each of these schools has a special emphasis: humanities, arts, science, communications, etc. However, AMYs also have the following common elements: small size, off-site location, individualized approaches to learning, highly structured mini-courses, with emphasis on basic skills and mastery of learning, parent and community involvement, and resources to meet the needs of pupils in the middle years. As with magnet schools, AMYs are open to pupils throughout the city, and enrollments are monitored to maintain racial balance. Funded by the school district operating budget, these schools are contributing greatly not only to the desegregation effort, but to the level of satisfaction of parents toward the public schools.

The third type of educational option being offered is the academics-plus school, a type of back-to-basics school. Philadelphia's first academic-plus school was opened in September 1976, in a vacant school building in an integrated section of the city. Pupils and their parents must agree on certain policies regarding homework, attendance, behavior, dress, promotion, and parent involvement. Pupils in the Fitler Academics Plus School have consistently shown substantial gain in national test scores in reading and math.

The Fitler Academics Plus School proved so popular that today there are 29 schools with a modified academics-plus program. Until the implementation of the voluntary desegregation plan, however, these schools attracted few pupils from outside the neighborhood. This condition has changed dramatically this year, with more than 4,000 minority pupils transferring to these predominantly white schools, located in the northeast section of the city.

Last September the Dunbar School, a predominantly black school located in the heart of the inner city, was designated an academics-plus school. Dunbar had a reputation for academic excellence, and when news of its designation as an academics-plus school spread to other communities, 50 white pupils transferred to Dunbar. This is in direct contradiction to the commonly accepted myth that white parents will not send their children to inner-city schools. No longer a neighborhood school, Dunbar is confident of attracting white pupils in greater numbers next year.

The final, and most dramatic, educational strategy being used in Philadelphia to desegregate its schools is the pairing of schools. It all began in the most unlikely area of the city, South Philadelphia, an area

closely identified with racial strife in the Whitman Housing Project. Two nearby schools—one predominantly white (Girard), and one predominantly black (Poe)—planned to merge into one desegregated school with pupils attending Girard for grades one through four and Poe for grades five through eight. The Girard Academic Music Program (GAMP), another highly successful desegregation program, was able to move from an off-site location in a South Philadelphia armory to the Poe School. GAMP, which also receives funds under the ESAA grant, offers pupils in grades five through nine intensive vocal and musical instruction along with a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills.

The merger of Girard and Poe came about after months of meetings with parents, staffs, administrators, and community leaders of both schools. It resulted from the hard work and commitment of many, many people.

Taking a lesson from Girard and Poe, two other schools in another community, also viewed as unlikely to become part of the desegregation plan, decided to merge. The Willard and Powers Schools are in the Kensington section, a provincial blue-collar white neighborhood. Kensington, however, has an enclave of blacks which dates back to the turn of the century, when wealthy Philadelphia families spent summers in Kensington, taking their black servants with them.

The merger of these two pairs of schools is considered a coup for the school district, which is now seeking other possible mergers. Both these mergers, in what are generally considered racially isolated communities, have shown that mergers can be effected in any neighborhood as long as people are committed to making voluntary desegregation work.

The School District of Philadelphia is convinced that the educational options described here can bring about a degree of desegregation in urban school districts. How much desegregation, of course, will depend on the racial composition of the schools.

In *Must We Bus?* Orfield (1978) addresses the question of whether there is a feasible desegregation plan for our largest cities. He says the answer depends on how desegregation is defined. If it means having predominantly white schools, then it is possible in no city. If, however, desegregation means racial balance, it is possible, he feels, in all cities.

Using a racial balance formula of no more than 75 percent and no less than 25 percent white as a desegregated school, the School District of Philadelphia has been able to desegregate, or very nearly desegregate, more than 20 additional schools in just one year. The district acknowledges that not every school will be desegregated, but every school will be a part of the desegregation effort, and every school will be a part of "A Blueprint for Academic Achievement."

As to the charge that under the voluntary desegregation plan, the school district is encouraging a new elitism, the district stands on the true meaning of "elitism" as "choice." In "Toward Elitist Schools," Jarrett (1979) urges that schools encourage "a new elitism," where every student will have the satisfaction of belonging, of having persisted to mastery, and of having developed a sense of excellence in a particular skill or knowledge.

The Philadelphia story demonstrates clearly that it is possible to desegregate urban schools, and that offering freedom of choice is the best road to achieving desegregation.

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